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EXAMINATION

OF

MR MAURICE'S THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS.

EDINBURGH :  
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EXAMINATION

OF

MR MAURICE'S THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS.

BY

ROBERT S. CANDLISH, D.D.

LONDON :

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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I HAVE endeavoured to make my examination intelligible without its being necessary for the reader to refer to the Essays. Of course, one familiar with the Essays, or having them at hand, may be able to shew that I have not always succeeded in this attempt. I have used liberties of abridgment in quoting the author's words ; but I can say that I have done so, only with a view of compression, and with a sincere desire rather to encumber my own book than to misrepresent the book which I was examining.

I have no right to plead haste as an apology for error ; and I have no wish to do so, in so far as the essential merits of the questions at issue are concerned. I may be allowed, however, to suggest, in palliation of the manner in which I have executed

my task, that I am not an Englishman trained to the nice use of the English tongue,—nor an English theologian, familiar with England's academic habits and modes of thought. My object will be thoroughly gained if I stir up one English thinker and doer to consider very seriously in what direction the tide of English theology appears in certain quarters to be running. I would have him to ask, also, by what practical measures, as well as by what deeper current of divine thought and feeling, that tendency is to be met.

*Edinburgh, 5th April, 1854.*

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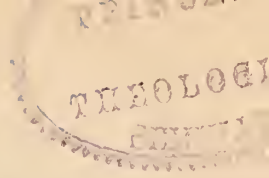
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EXAMINATION

OF

MR MAURICE'S THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS.





## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

*(Delivered in London, February 21, 1854.)*

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I PROPOSE to myself the task of giving you some idea of the contents of this book, and of their bearing upon questions which are most deeply interesting to men individually, and to society—questions involving the present power and ultimate issues of the Gospel of Christ. This is my single and exclusive object. I do not pretend to have mastered the other writings of this author; and I shall probably make little use even of such knowledge of them as I happen to possess. Neither do I venture to discuss the influences and tendencies which this book may be regarded as representing or advancing. I make no attempt towards a bird's-eye view of the literature and theology of the age. I intend to deal with this one work. And I am inclined to think, that if I shall succeed in dealing with it as I would wish to do, I may render more service to the cause of

truth, than if I were to inquire and speculate and form a theory to account for its appearance, or to anticipate its effects. Doubtless, its appearance is a phenomenon which may turn out to be a great fact, significant of many antecedents, pregnant with many consequences. But I do not enter upon any vague and wide inquiry regarding its probable origin and possible results. I take the product as I find it. And I mean to try if English minds, so far as I have access to them, cannot estimate its practical value, apart from all personal regard for its author;—and apart also from all abstract and mystical philosophising about its relation to the present conditions of human knowledge, or to the progressive development of human thought and feeling.

To give some unity to my remarks, which must necessarily be miscellaneous if they are to touch the varied topics of the book, I may be allowed to indicate, at the outset, what seems to me the real matter at issue, the vital and essential question raised. It is this,—Does God deal judicially with his intelligent creatures? Does he try and judge, to the effect of acquitting or condemning, the persons of men—you, my brother, personally, and me? I may, perhaps, best raise the question, if I advert to a letter from Mr Maurice to a private friend, published at Mr Maurice's request by Dr Jelf, in his pamphlet stating the grounds for his procedure against Mr Maurice before the Council of King's College, London. I had not my attention called to that

letter until I had completed my analysis of the Essays. But it seems to me to furnish a key to the Essays, which, on many accounts, is to be regarded as important. The Letter was written in November 1849, several years before the Essays were published; but the theory developed in the Essays is contained in the Letter, and the process of thought and feeling through which the theory was constructed, is in a very interesting manner laid open. Let it be observed, that the Letter is written in reply to a question regarding the duration of future punishment. The Essays are written with a view to persuade Unitarians, and especially those of the recent and more spiritual school, that, instead of repudiating, they ought to welcome the Anglican Creed and Articles, as the real expression of that life which they are panting for, and their best defence against counterfeits and exaggerations. It is evident, indeed, that the Letter is the germ of the Essays. The author deems it a point of honour to produce it in that character, in so far as the doctrine of a future state is concerned. No injustice, therefore, is done by making a notice of the Letter an introduction to the consideration of the Essays. This is the rather desirable, because in the Letter, as has been said, he means "to tell his correspondent something of the processes of thought through which he had himself passed while endeavouring to arrive at the truth" (p. 3).

1. "I was brought up," he tells his correspondent, "in the belief of universal restitution. I was taught

that the idea of eternal punishment could not consist with the goodness and mercy of God" (p. 3). But he explains how, when "he came to think and feel for himself, the views he had learned respecting sin" did not seem to "accord with his experience of it, or with the facts which he saw in the world." He shrunk also from what shocked his intellect and conscience, as being "a feeble notion of the divine perfections, one which represented *good-nature* of the highest of them." And he disliked the "distortions of the text of Scripture" frequently in use, such as making "eternal" signify different things when applied to punishment and to life respectively.

Thus three strong cords drew him out of the pit of old vulgar Universalism: a sense of sin; an apprehension of the divine perfections; reverence of the Scripture. Sin, in himself and in the world around him, was not to be made light of; the perfections of God were not to be resolved into mere good-nature; Scripture was not to be set aside, or twisted so as to mean anything or nothing. These were not, he acknowledges, "very deep, vital convictions." But "they were honest opinions as far as they went." And they made him "despise the Universalist and Unitarian theories as weak." "I do not know," he adds, "that I found anything at all better" (p. 4). He passes at once, accordingly, to the reconstruction of his own belief, *de novo*; which was, it would seem, a work or process altogether personal to himself: "I can say, I did not receive this of man,



neither was I taught it" (p. 5). Of course, no one is necessarily the worse for having to elaborate his own views and impressions of divine truth for himself, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, out of the materials furnished by the Word of God, and by his own consciousness and experience. And if, upon his emancipation from the lowest depths of Universalist latitudinarianism, the inquirer had gone on in earnest to follow out the three lines of thought which had been the means of his rescue,—sin, within and without,—the perfections of God,—the authority of Scripture;—keeping all the three distinct and parallel;—he would have been in the right way. There might have been as "great confusion and darkness" as that through which, he says, he got "every glimpse" of what has ultimately satisfied and settled his mind; perhaps more, a great deal more. But the subject,—man, the sinner; the object,—God, the all-perfect; the medium,—a real and actual communication from God to man, precisely such as one man makes to another;—these three primary facts;—the sin of man, the perfection of God, the word of God to man;—accepted as first principles, and drawn forth in humble, loving reverence of soul to their proper issues;—must have led to a theology, with far more in it of the element of a real transaction between us and our Maker than the author is prepared to admit.

2. The origin of his positive faith, following upon the destruction of the coldly negative belief in which he was

brought up, is described by him thus :—" When I began in earnest to seek God for myself, the feeling that I needed a deliverer from an overwhelming weight of selfishness was the predominant one in my mind. Then I found it more and more impossible to trust in any being who did not hate selfishness, and who did not desire to raise his creatures out of it. Such a Being was altogether different from the mere image of good-nature I had seen among Universalists. He was also very different from the mere Sovereign whom I heard of amongst Calvinists, and who it seemed to me was worshipped by a great portion of the religious world. But I thought he was just that Being who was exhibited in the cross of Jesus Christ. If I might believe his words, ' He that hath seen me hath seen the Father ; ' if in his death the whole wisdom and power of God did shine forth, there was one to whom I might fly from the demon of self, there was one who could break his bonds asunder. This was and is the ground of my faith " (p. 4).

It will be observed, that in the author's transition state, the only two ideas of the Supreme Being present to his mind were,—that of the Universalists, who bow before a mere image of good-nature—and that of the Calvinists, and a great portion of the religious world, who, as he represents the matter, worship a mere Sovereign. Further, it will be observed that the predominant feeling in his mind respecting himself was, that he needed to be delivered from an overwhelming weight

of selfishness. And, finally, since he cannot trust in any being who does not hate selfishness and desire to raise his creatures out of it, he welcomes the Being who is exhibited in the cross of Jesus Christ—especially believing his words, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”—as one to whom he may fly from the demon of self, who can break his bonds asunder. There is truth in all these experiences. An earnest man cannot reverence either a mere image of good-nature, or a mere sovereign. He is crushed under the weight of selfishness, bound by the demon of self. But, in the first place, is there no conception of God, but either Infinite Good-nature or Infinite Sovereignty, that haunts an awakened conscience? Is there no sense of a holy eye reading me through and through,—of the righteous arm of a Lawgiver and Judge holding me fast? Then, secondly, when my broken heart smites me for my selfishness,—my miserable selfishness, that will not spare Bathsheba in its lust, nor Uriah in its meanness,—my deplorable selfishness, that makes my very worship of God and my kindness to my fellows nothing else than disguised self-seeking,—I cannot feel that I have got to the root of the evil, until I hear the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and calling me out of my hiding-place among the trees of the garden. When,—feeling that he is reckoning with me for my disobedience, and feeling also instinctively that it is not in mere wrath,—I have the effrontery to say, *She, thy*

gift, led me to sin ; and when,—not smitten down for my monstrous ingratitude and heartlessness, I see him still waiting to be gracious ;—that makes me know my selfishness. And now, thirdly, the Being whom I must have to deliver me—whom I cannot do without—is that same Being,—holy, righteous, waiting to be gracious,—who must reckon with me for my sin,—whom I would have to reckon with me for my sin,—whom I could not love or trust if he did not reckon with me, in most rigorous justice, for my sin ;—who, pointing to the Son of his love, tells me that he beareth my sin in his own body on the cross, and slays the enmity thereby.

I have thought it fair to take the author's own account of the origin and rise of his theology as he gives it in this Letter, instead of forming a theory on the subject out of the Essays ; although I may say that the theory which I was inclined to form, to account for the Essays, before I carefully read the Letter, was very much the same as the explanation which I have been considering. And before passing on, I desire to fix one thought in your minds.

It is always important to know the starting-point of one who proposes for our acceptance a theology, or a view of divine truth, avowedly—and if not exclusively, at least most intimately, based upon and bound up with his own experience. This is necessary if we would do justice, either to him or to ourselves. It is not, of course, so necessary when a man professes simply to illustrate

an old and well-defined system, to place its relative parts in fresh and original lights, and bring out its harmony with the facts of his own life and consciousness, or of man's life and consciousness generally. Even in such a case it may be useful and interesting. But when one comes to us with a new system,—and still more, when he comes to us with a systematic repudiation of system,—to give us his own reading of divinity and humanity, as if he were surveying a hitherto unmapped continent,—then it becomes a matter of the highest importance to ascertain, if possible, his point of view from the outset; that we may fairly estimate the probable effect of his speculations on himself, as well as the influence which they ought to exert over us. For instance, take Sleiermacher in Germany. Those who know his history and writings better than I do, tell us that to the last his Moravian training and deep Moravian piety continued to steep his whole nature in an intensely spiritual warmth, and leaven his compositions with an energetic, spiritual life. Hence it might happen that opinions and tendencies might be comparatively harmless in his mind,—nay, might be so blended with his old Moravianism as to be not only neutralised, but, as if by some chemical affinity, absorbed,—which, nevertheless, when transferred to minds otherwise constituted and otherwise trained, might become the germs of the coldest Rationalism. Or take our own Coleridge. He began at the very opposite extreme from the German thinker; and was led on in a

path which, probably, none else ever trod,—through almost unparalleled conflicts and exercises of soul,—to such a profound insight into the guilt and misery of sin, and the glorious mystery of the divine government and nature, as must have been eminently blessed to himself, and must ever furnish materials of most interesting study to all inquiring students, whether of man's nature or of God's. But the height which a man may reach as he toils his perilous way from the lowest depth up the steep and rough ascent, though most profitable for himself, may be unsafe for one whose position, given to him, is higher still. I may thus be tempted,—with neither heart so ardent to aspire nor foot so firm to persevere,—to meet the adventurous pilgrim where he is—not resting, but cut off in the very heart of his struggling upward. And I may make it a matter of silly boasting that I can stand at ease where such a one as Coleridge, still pressing on, fell. Equally unsafe may it be for me,—alas! with but little of Moravian devotion, and, it may be, too little also of Moravian discipline,—to think that I occupy ground high enough, when I am on the level of that subtle idealistic philosophy, which one wont to soar aloft on eagle's wings into the atmosphere around the throne, and bound by cords of love inseparable to Him who sits upon the throne, might, if not without peril, yet almost with impunity, make his scientific, because it was not his spiritual, standing-point. These remarks apply in some measure to Mr Maurice; with one qualification,



however, which is noted here, not invidiously, but as a necessary caution : that whereas he begins at a level far nearer that at which Coleridge began than that at which Sleiermacher began,—the level of low Universalism, not high Moravianism,—he does not appear to have pushed his inquiries so far as Coleridge did, into man's sinful nature and the Almighty's moral government. In particular, in his very first statement of the experience which originated his theology, as well as throughout the whole of his subsequent exposition of his theology, there is an entire omission of the fact of guilt, as a real fact in our history, and a fact with which a righteous God must deal.

I may return again to the Letter. But it may be proper, before proceeding further, to submit an outline of what these Essays teach. This I scruple not to do in my own words, briefly but boldly, being prepared to verify what I say in full detail.

1. Love, absolute and unconditional, is the whole nature of God. This love is not mere facile and imbecile good-will. It is compatible with indignation, anger, wrath : it implies wrath. "Wrath against that which is unlovely," is an essential attribute of it. The will of God, strong against the unlovely, seeks to subdue and assimilate all other wills to his own nature, which is love. Thus God is love.

2. Sin is something different and distinct from crime to be checked by outward penalties, or habit to be

extirpated by moral influences. The first of these is the legislative idea of sin; the second, the ethical. Both are set aside; and instead of them there is substituted what may be called the exclusively personal idea of sin. An unloving, an unlovely creature, finds himself, at some awful moment, alone with the great Being whose very nature is love — whose name is Father. An intense feeling of his being in a wrong state, himself the doer of wrong, himself the thinker of wrong, himself displeasing to his Father, and not right with his Father, seizes him. It is not a sense of his having transgressed a law and being justly liable to punishment. It is not a sense of his being under the power of an evil habit needing to be eradicated. It is the discovery that he is not what he now sees that his Father is, and what he is now intimately conscious that his Father would have him to be.

Thus the case is stated: the question is raised. We have the nature and will of God on the one hand, and the sin of man, in a certain view of it, on the other. How the case is to be met, how the question is to be solved, is next to be considered. For this end,—

3. The actual position of man is brought out in two lights. He finds himself in the presence,—not merely of external circumstances fitted to exert evil influences, with, perhaps, an inward susceptibility of receiving these influences,—but of an Evil Spirit. He has to contend with a personal enemy—the Spirit of selfish-



ness. And self being the plague of man, the Spirit of selfishness tyrannises over him, and must be overcome. But, on the other hand, man—and here Job is taken as the type—conscious of a righteousness deeper than his sin, and more entirely his own, although sin seems almost as if it were himself;—claiming also a sort of indefeasible right to be delivered from evil;—has the explanation of this contradictory experience in the presence of a living Redeemer, who is with him, in him, the root of his being. This is Christ in every man.

4. The person and work of Christ are the subjects next in order; his person as the Incarnate Son; his work in the Atonement. On the subject of Christ's person, there are two Essays. In the first Essay, his divinity as the Son of God is asserted. It is asserted, however, chiefly to the effect of explaining, by means of it, the entire process of man's emancipation and deliverance. The Redeemer, who is with man and in man, as the root of his being, is discovered to be a Son, an actual Son of God, a strong Son of God. Owning him in that character as his Lord, man is free. The Incarnation, accordingly, of which the second of the two Essays treats, is not a step towards the effecting of man's deliverance. It is such a manifestation of the divine perfection and the divine will, in human nature, as mankind have ever been desiring; and such a combination and representation of all manhood's various properties as makes all men one. The value of it is, that it reveals

God, and unites men. It is not, however, so far as I can judge, essential to man's redemption. It is rather the full and complete exhibition of it. Men are still exhorted to recognise and own the Christ within,—the Redeemer in them—the root of their being—the strong Son of God. For anything I can see, the Redemption is really independent of the Incarnation. But, in fact, there is really no Redemption at all, in any fair sense of that term (Essays, p. 117, &c.)

This appears plainly when the work of Christ is discussed; especially in the Essay on the Atonement. There Christ is represented as giving up self-will—that self-will which is the root of all evil in man. He is also said to suffer the wrath of God. But how? Dwelling among men, he was content to endure all the effects and manifestations of that wrath against the unlovely, which is the essential attribute of love; and would not have that wrath quenched till it had effected its full loving purpose. His sacrifice is the giving up of self-will. His endurance of punishment is his perfect willingness that the loving God's wrath against the unlovely should continue to work on among men, until all unloveliness disappears; and that he, becoming one of them, should not be specially exempt. The idea of his expiating guilt by making himself a true and proper sacrifice of atonement, is in not very temperate language denounced; and, in fact, neither the obedience which he renders, nor the cross which

he bears, is, in any sense whatever, the procuring cause of man's redemption (Essays, p. 141, &c.)

Here I might almost close my summary. The essence of what this book teaches is in the statements which I have laid before you. The remainder of the book, though the larger portion of it, is little more than the drawing out of legitimate and necessary consequences. I must trace these, however, as rapidly as I can. And while I do so, I ask you to bear in mind two conclusions as to the author's teaching, which I think you will agree with me are fully established. The one respects the condition of man. The other respects the mind and will of God, as his manner of dealing with men is affected by the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ.

1. The condition of man is not the condition of a fallen being. I am not guilty and under condemnation. I am not depraved, having a nature radically corrupt—a heart alienated from God. I am apt to be selfish; I am selfish; self is my plague. And being thus unlovely, I cannot but be miserable in the presence of the God of love. I have an oppressor, also—a tyrant: the Evil Spirit of selfishness, whose yoke I ought to shake off, but cannot. I have, however, with me, in me, waiting only to be owned, a Redeemer, a Redeemer living: a strong Son of God—one with that God of love who is my Father, as he is intimately one with me, the very root of my being. I see him becoming a man, the

same as I am, and as all men are. As a man, he sacrifices self-will, and consents to endure what I and all men have to endure—the punishment which the wrath of the God of love against the unlovely inflicts on the children of men, until its full loving purpose is effected. I find in him a representative man, as well as a strong Son of God. But alas! I find in him no substitute—no vicarious Lamb of God.

2. The will of God is not only not changed by the Atonement—which of course is an impossibility—but it does not find in the Atonement any reason for a different mode of dealing with man from that which, irrespectively of the Atonement, might have been adopted as right and fitting. The wrath of God is not turned away from any: it is not quenched. But, what! some one says: would you really have it quenched? That wrath against the unlovely, which is the essential attribute of all love worthy of the name,—would you have it quenched in the bosom of Him who is love, so long as anything unlovely anywhere or in any one remains? No. But the object against which the wrath burns is not merely an abstraction; it is a living person—myself, for example. And that wrath is not merely indignant or sorrowful dislike of what is unlovely in me on the part of a Father whose nature is love;—but holy displeasure and righteous disapprobation on the part of One who, however he may be disposed to feel and act towards me as a Father, is at all events my Ruler and my Judge;—

whose law I have broken and by whom I am condemned. There is room here for his arranging that, through the gracious interposition of his own Son, meeting on my behalf the inviolable claims of justice, his wrath should be turned away from me;—and if from me, from others also, willing to acquiesce in the arrangement. If a moral government according to law is conceivable, such a procedure is conceivable under it.

Of course, even after such a procedure in our favour, He whose love we thus experience will have more cause than ever to be angry with us for whatever in us is unlovely. And he may deal with us in various ways for the removal of it. But still the Atonement will have effected a real and decided change in our position,—in our relation to God. There is, in consequence of the Atonement, and our acceptance of it, an actual removal from us of the wrath and the condemnation under which we personally were before. But take the doctrine of this book, and there neither is, nor can be, any change whatever effected in the position of any man by virtue of the Atonement. All that Christ's endurance of the wrath of God, in the author's sense of that doctrine, can possibly do, is to bring out more vividly than ever the intensity of the dislike which the God of love has of the unlovely. This it does quite generally;—giving to all men an affecting proof that punishment must continue to be administered—that the wrath of the loving God cannot be quenched—till it has effected its loving

purpose. This is all that it does. As to everything else, it leaves men where they would have been without it.

A momentous consequence follows. There is absolutely no security for any of the human race being ever beyond the reach of punishment; there is no security for the wrath of God ever being quenched in the case of any. Let me hold by the opinion, that the Atonement effects a real change in the position of those who submit to it; that it brings them out of the position of condemned criminals into the position of acquitted free-men, of adopted children—I can understand how, by a renovating process, and by a fatherly discipline continued here for a time, they are prepared for passing, ere long, into a world whence all that is unlovely is for ever excluded. But if I take up the author's view, I see nothing before any of us, even those of us who have owned a Son of God as freeing us from the yoke of the Evil Spirit,—those of us who have that knowledge of the Son which is eternal life,—except an indefinite prolongation of our present experience. For when, or how, are we ever finally to get rid of that ugly plague of self, with which the unselfish and loving God cannot but be angry? I confess when this result, not of the author's representation of the Atonement merely, but of his whole teaching in these Essays, began to flash upon my mind, I read almost with a shudder one of the fifteen conclusions relative to a future state to which he comes,



and which he recites as final, in the Letter already quoted. He says "he feels it his duty," among other things, "*not* to deny God a right of using punishments at any time or anywhere for the reformation of his creatures" (p. 8). It was not the apparent questioning of God's right to punish for other ends that startled me. But is it really meant, I asked myself, that there is never to be a time when,—that there is nowhere a place where,—the creatures of God are to be beyond the reach of punishment; so reinstated in the favour of their Father, and so restored to his likeness, that there shall be no occasion any more in their case for that which indicates his wrath against the unlovely,—nor indeed any possibility of it? And calling to mind the complete system of these most systematic Essays,—for so they are, whatever the author may profess,—I could not but perceive that the very same views which hold out the prospect of ultimate deliverance from evil to all, absolutely preclude the certainty of complete deliverance for any.

This may be more intelligible to you if I ask you to follow me while I hastily sketch the substance of the remaining Essays.

It is not necessary to dwell on what the author says concerning the death and burial of Christ, his descent into hell, his resurrection and ascension, considered as parts of his mediatorial work,—his meritorious service and its reward. There is not much importance

attached to them in that view. In fact, the chief anxiety of the author is to take all these events out of the category of what might be regarded as special and peculiar to Christ, and to make them part and parcel of our common human experience. The value of them to us is, that the Ruler and Lord of our spirits, the deepest root of our being—a Son of God, a Son of man—has tasted the death which we are to die, lain in the grave where our remains are to lie, visited whatever abyss of hideous vacancy might haunt the uneasy soul, proved the uninterrupted life of the entire man, and become invisible that he may be always, and especially in the Eucharist, really present with us. In such a discussion of these topics, much interesting sentiment could not but be expressed by such a writer. It must be observed, however, that there is not only no mention made of any offices to be executed by Christ in connexion with our redemption after his death, but everything of the sort is virtually excluded. There is nothing like a sacerdotal ministry carried on in heaven—nothing at all analogous to the ministry of the high priest within the veil, the presenting of the offered sacrifice, and the making of intercession in connexion with it. There is no exaltation to rule and authority for the following out of the ends of his sacrifice. His ascension from Mount Olivet would really seem to mean nothing more than his disappearance out of the sight of the disciples at Emmaus. One would suppose him to be personally,



in the body, as really on the earth, going in and out among us, as he was during the forty days that elapsed between his rising from the grave and his going up in the clouds to heaven. The use which is made of this idea for reconciling conflicting views of the Real Presence in the Eucharist is not a little ingenious;—although it may be doubted whether the Romanist will part with his actual eating of the body and blood of Christ in the wafer,—or the Protestant with his feeding on Christ by faith, in the Spirit and through the word,—for the notion of the Beloved of his soul being at his very side, while yet he may not see his face, or hear his voice, or touch even the hem of his garment.

But the more practical point for consideration at present, is the view given of these events in our Lord's history, as bearing upon the condition and prospects of men. It may be convenient here to depart a little from what might be the natural order; and, indeed, this is rendered necessary by the circumstance, that what the author says of the Resurrection in the eighth Essay, is closely connected with his more formal exposition of the Judgment-day in the twelfth.

The first thing, therefore, to be observed is, that there is no general resurrection, and no final judgment. I do not argue these great topics here, nor do I go into the details of the author's reasoning. Of course he retains the words Resurrection and Judgment. But then he holds that every man's death is his resurrection. Death,

according to him, is not the separation of soul and body ; it is the entire man, soul and body together, rising out of the clay-cold form which we consign to the earth, not to be the seed and germ of a glorious body, but to be no more heard of for ever. Judgment, again, is not a trial, —a judicial process,—with a view to the pronouncing of final sentence, and the separating of men into two classes. It is merely an unveiling or uncovering, such as may be expected on our passing into a clearer light, disclosing and revealing to us, more and more, both God and ourselves.

Now see how this fits into what I pointed out as an inevitable conclusion from the author's doctrine of the Atonement. To all practical intents and purposes, the future state is to all alike absolutely nothing more than a continuation of the present. There is no day fixed,—nay, there is no prospect of a day,—when the most faithful followers of Christ shall be rewarded by their present chequered experience coming to an end ; and a new era coming in, to introduce a new condition of life, with no more sorrow in it, and no more sin. Death is not such an era, nor the Resurrection, nor the Judgment. Nay, for anything I can see, when I come to undergo, and that for countless ages, the searching and relentless illumination of all above, around, within me, which awaits me as I shuffle off this mortal coil, never to be mine again,—I may have before me even an intenser, and still ever intenser, struggle, with that unlovely

selfishness which besets me now,—and a keener, far keener, sense of the wrath of my God against it! Ah me! is it really come to this? Is my probation never to be ended? Am I never to enter into the joy of my Lord?

Perhaps the author might taunt me, as apparently he taunts Dr Jelf, with “wanting that kind of security for the bliss of heaven which we want for our earthly possessions;” adding the quiet irony, “No saint in heaven has that bliss in fee; he never wishes so to have it; he it holds by continual dependence on a righteous and loving Being.” True. But, nevertheless, I long to hold it by the same kind of security by which my Saviour holds it: and what is more, my Saviour tells me that I shall.

And now, with the Incarnation and Atonement in the past, on the one hand;—and the Judgment on the other hand, in the future;—the intermediate position of man may be ascertained. Two topics occur here, Justification and Regeneration.

As to Justification, it is scarcely necessary to say, after the sketch already submitted, that it has nothing in it of the nature of a forensic or judicial act. If there be nothing judicial in the Atonement, and nothing judicial in the Judgment, manifestly there can be nothing judicial in Justification. If God, in the Atonement, reckons as a Judge with his Son, as standing in the room and stead of guilty criminals—if, in the Judgment, he reckons as a Judge with all men, calling them to

account and passing sentence according to their works, —then there may be keeping and consistency in our teaching, that when God justifies, he summons the offender before him, and looking upon him as one by faith with his own righteous Son, acquits and accepts him accordingly. Such a view, however, though in strict accordance with the Lutheran and Pauline doctrine, is repugnant to the whole spirit of the theology of this book. According to that theology, Justification cannot denote the entrance—the introduction—of a man into a new state, or a new relationship to the Supreme Being. It can be nothing more than the vindication or recognition of a state or relationship previously existing. And so it is. The resurrection of Christ is the justification of himself as the Son of God. And it is also the justification of all men, as thereby declared and proved to be sons. It is so, *ipso facto*, apart from any assent or consent on our part at all. Now it is true that Luther, following his great master, Paul, does connect the resurrection of Christ very closely with the justification of all who believe in him. The resurrection of Christ is his justification. In raising him from the dead the Father justifies him,—acknowledges him, not only as his Son, but as his righteous servant, who by the knowledge of himself is to justify many. His resurrection is the evidence of his meritorious obedience and vicarious sacrifice being accepted on behalf of the guilty. He

was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Still our justification, on the footing of his resurrection—and, as it were, in terms of it—is a new act. The pardoning mercy,—the free, justifying grace,—is here. But, personally and individually, every man for himself, we must come in, or be brought in. And as we stand before the righteous Judge—the loving Father,—ourselves guilty, but united by the Spirit through faith to Christ,—united to him as raised from the dead for his righteousness' sake,—we have acceptance in the Beloved.

With Justification, Regeneration is intimately associated. Upon any system this is true. The view taken of Justification must always materially affect the idea formed of Regeneration. In the Essays there is an exact correspondence of the one to the other. Justification manifests a previously existing relationship; Regeneration apprehends, or realises it. The notion of a change of nature is not admitted. It affords scope for what, upon another subject, might be relished as pleasant raillery, about a new nature being superadded to the old, and the like grotesque fancies. But the new birth, as implying a renovation of man's moral nature,—and especially as implying that there is implanted in the heart a new seed, or principle, of godliness,—is unequivocally disowned. The name is retained, and the conversation with Nicodemus in the third chapter of the Gospel by John is expounded. But how? The second part of

the conversation,—which speaks of the love of God to the world, as manifested in the sending of his only-begotten Son,—is taken, not as the necessary supplement or complement of the first part, which speaks of the nature and necessity of the new birth,—but as the full expression of what it teaches. Doubtless the second portion of this discourse forms the supplement or complement of the first part. The mistake lies in confounding or mixing up the two. The closing revelation made by our Lord to Nicodemus may be a key,—it is the key,—to his preliminary expostulation. But they must not be mixed up with one another. And the one must not be made the substitute for the other.

Keep the two parts distinct, and they wonderfully fit into one another. There is a work of the Spirit within me, giving my faculties of thought, feeling, conscience, and, above all, my will, an entirely new direction,—Godward, to use a good old word, and heavenward. There is presented to me by the same Spirit,—in Christ, in the Son of man lifted up,—a manifestation of the love of God, far beyond mere good-nature—far beyond mere absolute love, with its attribute of wrath against the unlovely,—the manifestation of a love meeting the crisis of my guilt by the sacrifice of an only-begotten Son. They are separate; these two acts, or works. But they are simultaneous. Like the two gases under the electric spark, they meet. There is a flash of light;—and then a calm, pure river of water of life, clear as



erystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,—and making glad the city of God.

But if you confound them,—or if you put the one for the other—you really make void both of them. There is no real change in my nature within me, if there is no real change in my relation without me. If the Gospel is to tell me, not that I must and that I may become what I am not;—but only that I ought to know what I already am;—there can be no occasion for any radical renovation or revolution in my moral being. All that is needed is that I shall be informed and persuaded; not that I must be converted, created anew. It is the call to accept a privilege never possessed, never possible, before;—a privilege which, however precious in itself, brings me too near to God, and places me too deeply under obligation to God to be agreeable to my suspicious and jealous soul;—it is this, and this alone, which makes palpable the necessity of my being made “willing in the day of the Lord’s power.”

Hitherto, following the Essays, I have spoken of Theology, or the Gospel of Christ, in its bearing upon men generally, simply as men to be redeemed, justified, regenerated; or as being actually redeemed, justified, regenerated. But any one, even ordinarily acquainted with theological method, knows that there is another view to be taken of the Gospel. It is to be viewed as not merely meeting the wants of men, whether in the mass or individually, but as forming a society, based upon

certain principles and placed under certain rules. I refer, of course, to the doctrine of the Church, a topic far too wide for full consideration now; on which, however, I must at least indicate what I take to be the teaching of this book. There are three Essays bearing on this subject: those on Inspiration, on the Personality and Teaching of the Holy Spirit, and on the Unity of the Church. The connexion of the three appears to be this:—The Church is informed by the teaching of Inspiration; it is quickened by the indwelling of the Spirit; and so, it is one.

1. Inspiration falls to be discussed in this connexion, as God's method of informing the Church—his manner of imparting knowledge. In this view, the Essay on Inspiration ought to have had for its title not Inspiration, but Revelation. That is the real question raised in it; the question, I mean,—Is there, or is there not, given to the Church, an authoritative Revelation of the mind and will of God? That is the question to be settled.

Very much of what the author says about the inspiration of deep, earnest thinkers,—as well as also what he says about the inspiration of creative genius in poetry and art,—may be admitted as true. Rapt sages, seers, singers of every age and clime, have doubtless experienced, more or less consciously, the impulse and guidance of a power not their own;—a power which we need not hesitate to identify, as Milton did, with the fire that kindled Isaiah's bosom and opened his burning lips.



In the pencil that could make the canvas glow with nature's brightest radiance, or sink far back into nature's remotest shade, or start into nature's busiest and wildest life, or calmly rest in the peace of nature's beautiful and awful death ;—in the chisel that could evoke out of cold marble, in living power and chastest purity, the ideals of nature's best and loveliest forms, till the dull matter all but speaks ;—need we scruple to recognise the traces of the same Spirit of God, the same wisdom of heart, with which the Lord filled the men who were to cut the stones and carve the work of the Tabernacle? By all means, let these and all other methods by which God may design to train his creatures to the love of the pure, the beautiful, the sublime, the holy, be appreciated and improved. Very possibly there is ground for charging the religious world, and religious men, with timidity and inconsistency in their attitude towards Greek and Roman lore,—towards Greek and Roman poetry and art ;—whether original, or revived and reproduced in modern efforts. There may have been too much vacillation between undue sensitiveness and scrupulosity on the one hand, and a tame acquiescence in usage on the other, under shelter of an unheeded protest. Certainly in these days, the relation of Christianity to the products of science, taste, and genius, is a topic which cannot be evaded. And who so competent to deal with it as this author?—If only he would approach it with somewhat less of contempt for the not unnatural apprehensions and

difficulties of serious minds :—and I must add also, with somewhat more of a knowledge of real human nature, among the average of the women of England, I dare to say, as well as of its boys and men (Essays, p. 278).

Still the question remains, Have we,—altogether distinct from these means by which God may partly train and teach those who make a wise use from them,—Have we, distinct from them in kind, a Revelation? Is the Bible an authoritative standard and rule of faith? Does God in the Bible make a communication to us,—exactly as one of us might make a communication to another,—by messengers sent at sundry times, and commissioned to speak in divers manners?

Nor are we here called to inquire into the nature of the inspiration granted to one who has to convey a direct message from God, as distinct from the divine help which a man may have in the use of the common materials of thought and speculation. We are not even called to inquire whether the inspiration of the Bible is plenary and verbal, or not. Let it be first settled that we have, in the Bible, a collection of actual messages and communications from God to us; and we may then consider upon what principles they are to be interpreted. But the Bible is not, in these Essays, accepted as a revelation, in the true and proper meaning of that word. It is indeed exalted to a high place, as being pre-eminently, and *par excellence*, the Book by means of which God discovers himself to us. It stands alone in

that respect, and admits of no rival near its throne. Still the manner in which God discovers himself to us in the Bible, through the writings of prophets and apostles, is really not essentially different from the manner in which he discovers himself through the writings of other gifted men. The difference is a difference of measure or degree.

I may take the liberty of warning you whom I now address, against the attempt too often made to confound together these two questions of the Inspiration of Scripture, and its Divine authority. It is very easy to involve an inquirer in inextricable doubts as to the nature of the impulse or influence under which the authors of the Bible wrote; and as to the extent to which it has secured the infallible accuracy of their thoughts, statements, and words. By a kind of sleight of hand, he is thus made to believe that it is the fact or doctrine of the Bible being an authoritative revelation of God's will which is thus embarrassed. No two things can be more distinct. Satisfy yourself upon the point of the Bible being a communication from God; given by him with authority. Then, and then only, are you prepared to ascertain, from the Bible itself, what its inspiration really is.

And I may warn you also to beware of another controversial artifice,—a discreditable artifice,—which this author ought to have disdained. It is a precious old Puritan and Evangelical doctrine, that the same Spirit

who superintended the composition of the Bible, is given to the humble reader of the Bible, that he may understand, believe, and profit by it. Can it be a mere mistake and stupid blunder, which makes the author represent these two offices as inconsistent? Are they not manifestly conspiring, not conflicting works? Are they not most beautifully coincident?

The author laments the cruelty to which the younger members of evangelical families are subjected (Essays, 340, 341). They are told that they cannot apprehend the truth and meaning of the Bible without a special inspiration of the Spirit in themselves, which as yet they have not. And then they are sent to satisfy themselves, by the study of a cumbrous external evidence, as to a complicated and incredible theory about the Bible being, down to its minutest jot and tittle, the handwriting of God, as directly and immediately as were the Ten Commandments on the tables of stone.

What amount of injudicious training there may be in evangelical, as in other families, I cannot tell. But how stands the fact, as to the doctrine actually held by our fathers;—as well as by us, who seek to teach it to our children? There, we say; there is the Bible. The Holy Ghost was in the writing of it all through; he moved the holy men who spake in it; and he has left his own impress on every book, on every page of it. True, you cannot understand it without his teaching. He must himself give you understanding to under-

stand the Scriptures, and open your hearts to receive them. The Father promises to give the Holy Spirit to you if you ask him. Search, then, the Scriptures, as writings which the Holy Spirit has prepared for you. Pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit to be with you, and in you. Search and pray in faith. You will not have long to wait. The bright glory of God shining forth everywhere, as the pervading characteristic of all the Bible, in all its parts; and your hearts in you being made willing unreservedly to accept and to do the will of God;—this glory of God in the Bible, and this owning of the will of God in your hearts,—these two meeting together;—you will know of a truth that the Bible is the Word of God, better and more surely than whole libraries of external evidences could teach you.

I ask your pardon for what may look too much like preaching. It seemed the shortest way of meeting a misrepresentation, and giving an idea of the doctrine of the divine self-evidencing power of the Gospel, as bound up with the doctrine of the necessity of divine teaching to apprehend it. For further study of both, I send you to John Owen. It will be a sad day for our country's theology, if the massive thinking of the old Puritan Chancellor of Oxford shall ever be displaced by more modern methods of grappling with the errors of Socinianism and Infidelity.

2. To constitute the society which the Gospel is designed to form, not only is information by the teach-

ing of Inspiration provided,—but quickening or life also, by the indwelling of the Spirit. And the issue is the one universal Church. Here let it suffice to say that, practically, as between Evangelical divines and these Essays, the issue lies within small compass. Is the Church a society, whether visible or not, or partly visible and partly not,—is it a society distinct from the world,—distinct from the general mass of mankind? Is the work of the Holy Spirit in forming the Church a work of personal dealing with individual persons, one by one—with a view to separate them, by a process of conviction and conversion, from the world,—to change them from what they naturally are,—to make them a peculiar people? The separation may not be outward: there may be no leaving of old societies—no joining of any new one. But it may be not the less real on that account. The doctrine of the Essays would seem to be, that under the influence of a universal presence of the Holy Spirit, convincing the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, juster views of moral evil, of moral good, and of God's discrimination between the two, pervade society wherever Christianity prevails. Through the influence of that presence men are brought to know and feel, not what they need to be and may be, but what they already are—sons, justified, regenerate. And as this process, not of conversion, but, as it were, of self-recognition, goes on, the Church is in course of being formed. In short, the Church is the world



acknowledging its position in Christ ;—it is mankind become alive to the apprehension and realisation of the actual and universal redemption of humanity.

You perceive how completely and symmetrically the different parts of the author's theology in this book hang together. Throughout, there is a careful and consistent disavowal of anything being really done by God. The whole resolves itself into mere discovery on the part of God ; outward or inward discovery as regards us ; or both ; but still discovery alone.

This comes out very strikingly in what was the last Essay in the first edition of the book—the Essay on the Trinity in Unity. That great mystery the author rightly holds to be the crowning and culminating point in theology ; the resting-place of the inquirer ; the home, as it were, of spiritual sacrifice and prayer. In one view, indeed, the doctrine of the Trinity may fitly be the beginning as well as the end of a right theological method. It will naturally be so, if there are separate acts or offices to be ascribed to the several Persons of the Godhead, and if these are to be considered as laying the foundation of spiritual experience. In that case, we can scarcely dispense with a dogmatic and formal statement of this truth, at the commencement of any summary we mean to give of God's ways of dealing with men. Even then, however, it will always be interesting to rise again, at the conclusion, into the high contemplation of the essential nature of God ; and the wondrous manner

of his subsistence as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For thus the ultimate and united glory of whatever is accomplished by the Persons of the Trinity, considered apart from one another, may be ascribed to the one undivided Godhead, in whose infinite wisdom and love the whole plan had its origin and rise.

The theology of these Essays admits easily of the postponement of this doctrine of the Trinity to the close. In truth, according to that theology, the doctrine is really the result or product of a process of induction; opening up, one after another, the glorious Three in One. First, God is apprehended as being to us a Father. Next, it is felt that there must be one to be our champion—our deliverer from the Evil Spirit,—and that he must be the Son of that Father,—his Eternal Son. And then, there must be a Spirit, in whom the Father and the Son are one,—and who, proceeding from the Father and the Son, quickens men. As the Spirit of the Father, he quickens them to the confession that they are sons of God; and as the Spirit of the Son, to the confession that they are brethren. I shall not offer any remarks here on this exposition of the baptismal formula. I merely observe, in the first place, that the distinction of the Persons in the Trinity is chiefly viewed as a distinction of relationship; our belief in it being grounded on the original filial relationship in which we are supposed to stand, simply as creatures, to God as our Father; a relationship for which, unless it be in



some very vague and figurative sense, I find no warrant, either in reason, or in conscience, or in Scripture; and secondly, that while no distinct offices or works are ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—while there is no distribution among them of the parts of any real and actual transaction—it may in the long run be found not a little difficult to guard any such representation of the Trinity,—based upon an almost exclusively subjective foundation,—from lapsing into Sabellianism;—and so becoming a mere threefold exhibition or manifestation of the one Person, the Father.

I come now to the concluding Essay, in which one would almost think that the author manifests some little irritation. He is like a man who has travelled a long road, with infinite pains, all the day; and who, as weary night closes, and he catches a glimpse of the hospitable mansion of rest, finds a heavy gate flung unceremoniously in his face, or a strong bar suddenly let fall across his path. But really he need not be so impatient. He might have foreseen this result all the time. And, in fact, he has had an eye to it. His previous Essays have thoroughly demolished the ground on which,—I say not the doctrine of unending retribution,—but any doctrine of retribution at all, can stand.

Hence, I really am not very careful to join issue with him on the subject of this last Essay. My issue with him would be, or rather has already been, on a higher and wider theme; the nature and character of the moral

government of God. I stand for the authority of God as Judge, in the plain English meaning of the word judge. I stand for the authority of his law, and its sanctions; apart from which I see no hope for earth, no security against heaven itself becoming as hell. A theology without law,—law in the condemnation,—law in the atonement,—law in the justification,—law in the judgment,—is to me like the universal return of chaos and old Night. But a few brief remarks may be allowed upon the Essay in question.

As to the word “eternal,” of which the author makes so much in his correspondence with Dr Jelf—as well as in the concluding Essay in the second edition of his book, manifestly arising out of that correspondence,—I confess myself to have been not a little puzzled at first to make out what the exact bearing of his somewhat subtle criticism was meant to be. I am inclined to think, however, that it is, after all, a mare’s nest he has found. He will not hear of “eternal” signifying endless duration. Eternity is not endless time. It is something positive. I believe he is substantially right. But I suspect that when any person or thing comes to have associated with him, or with it, the attribute of eternity, it will be extremely difficult to make out that endless duration is not necessarily implied. I will try to explain my meaning in one or two brief propositions.

I. The words “eternal” and “eternity” do not denote merely negative ideas: they are not negations of time,

but assertions or affirmations of what is independent of time. Infinity or immensity, in spite of the negative form of the word, is not a negation of limited extension, but the assertion or affirmation of what is independent of limited extension, as eternity is of limited duration. Time, or limited duration, is in eternity as limited extension is in immensity. But no multiplication of limited durations—no prolonging of time either way, will make eternity: as, in like manner, no multiplication of limited extensions will make immensity. Call them laws of thought or real existences, as you please; or say that by necessary laws of thought—by the unalterable constitution of our mental nature, they imply eternal and infinite being. At all events they are positive, absolute realities—not notions reached by merely adding together an indefinite number of limited durations and limited extensions, or by imagining the removal of the limits on either side.

II. Whatever the word *eternal* qualifies, it removes altogether out of the category or region of time. Whatever is thus qualified, although it exists in time, is not any longer subject to the conditions, or within the measures, of time. It does not grow, by progression or prolongation, from time on to eternity. It leaps, or is carried at a bound, clear out of time into eternity. When it is said, "He that believeth in the Son of God hath eternal life," the life which he has is still in time, for he who has it is in time. But the eternity of it is

not merely a lengthening out of the time. It may be called a quality, or it may be said to denote the quality, of the life spoken of. More properly speaking, it indicates what we may venture to call the region, or sphere, or essential nature of that life, as belonging to the category of the absolute, the fixed;—and not to the category of the relative, the mutable. The eternal life, therefore, which man, believing in the Son of God, receives, or has, is a life as fixed and absolute, as remote from the vicissitudes and as much beyond the measures of time, as is the life of God.

III. This life is in the Son; and he is the Eternal Son, eternally begotten. In his correspondence with Dr Jelf, the author more than once refers to the use which he has been accustomed to make, in his public teaching, of the idea of eternity, on which “his suggestions respecting punishment depend,” as a conclusive argument against Arianism. “In speaking of the doctrine of Arius, I have again and again explained to my pupils, that his errors arose from his mixing time with relations which had nothing to do with time.” (*Grounds, &c.*, by Dr Jelf, p. 19.) Again, speaking of Athanasius, he says: “He felt that Arius, in attributing notions derived from time to the only-begotten Son, was, in fact, bringing back the old divided Pagan worship.” Athanasius “asserted the *eternal* generation of the Son, not as a dry dogma, but as a living principle, in which every child and peasant was interested—certainly not under-

standing eternal to mean *endless*." (Letter to Dr Jelf, p. 9.) The meaning would seem to be that, by calling the generation of the Son eternal, the relation implied in it was lifted above all notions derived from time ;—and all inquiry as to the date of it consequently silenced.

IV. But whatever is the force and value of the word "eternal" when it qualifies the generation of the Son, as an argument against the Arians,—exactly the same is its force and value, when it qualifies the life which a man believing in the Son receives, as an argument against the very idea of a date, or an end, or a change. Let the author be consistent with himself. He meets Arius, who assigns a beginning to the existence of the Son, by means of the word "eternal." Of course I know he does not mean that the word "eternal," as applied to the Son, denotes merely—without beginning. It does not meet the Arian heresy directly. But what I ask is, Does it meet that heresy really and *bonâ fide*? If so, it must be because when eternity is predicated of the Son, or of the generation of the Son,—whatever else is to be understood, or whatever more,—it must, at all events, by implication deny that there was or could be any commencement of the Sonship. And so, when eternal life is given, it is life possessed of a quality or character to which the limits and laws of time do not apply. But, nevertheless, or rather on that very account, the possibility of change or end is excluded.

V. Now, I challenge the same principle of interpreta-

tion precisely for the opposite expressions—eternal death, eternal punishment, eternal fire. Eternity has a Son for the Father. Eternity has a life for those to whom the Son gives life in the knowledge of himself. Eternity has a death, a punishment, a fire, for those whom the Judge shall condemn. And whatever that punishment or fire may be,—whatever stripes, whatever horror of destruction from the presence of the Lord,—there must attach to whatever of evil has the character or stamp of eternity affixed to it, in connexion with whatever persons may have it as their portion, the very same independence of the accidents of time—the very same exclusion of the possibility of change or end—which belongs to the Son as eternally begotten of the Father; and to the life which consists in the knowledge of the Son, and is, therefore, like the Son, eternal.

The plain truth is this: it is the author himself who should be the object of his own metaphysical scorn. It is the author himself who is for introducing the idea of time, with its changes, into the unbroken oneness of eternity. Grant that eternity is the very being of God. Then I hold, that whatever He marks out in his word as eternal, has in it the same quality of endurance with the being of God. And it will be very difficult to make Scripture say anything else than that the exercise of penal severity—the infliction of righteous retribution—has upon it this mark of God's own eternity.

But metaphysical subtleties, as well as minute and



critical word-catching, may well be dispensed with, when so awful a theme is before us. They are especially out of place when they can serve no other purpose than that of clouding and obscuring what the author must know is the real point at issue.

On several accounts, I may be allowed to express my regret on account of the treatment which this book and its author have received. I have no right to sit in judgment on the proceedings of ecclesiastical or academic authorities in England, but I may form and express an opinion ; and I have no hesitation in saying that I regard the summary ejection of Mr Maurice from his offices in King's College as a calamity. Mr Maurice, in one of his letters to Dr Jelf, refers to some " Scotch Calvinists, heavily bowed with the yoke of the Westminster Confession," who " are turning to our forms, as witnesses of a Gospel to mankind which they are hindered from preaching " (p. 16). It is just possible that a recent case in Brighton may have been in his eye. I would only say, whether that be so or not, that if any process for censure, or deprivation of office, against Mr Maurice had been conducted as that process was conducted,—and as we are accustomed to see such processes conducted in Scotland ;—with some delay, yet with full publicity ; with all the regular formality of a carefully-drawn indictment, an examination of witnesses, and the fullest hearing of parties ;—considering the man, the church, the cause concerned ;—unspeakable good might

have been effected ; a most valuable testimony for truth might have been borne ; and an exposure made, not of one isolated error, but of a systematic form of false doctrine,—such as England might have been the better for ages hence. For I must, with all deference to Principals, venture to make another remark. How any theologian could bring himself to discuss and condemn—or even to discuss—what Mr Maurice says on the subject of future punishment, at the very close of his book, and almost by way of a mere appendix,\* otherwise than in connexion with his whole previous teaching throughout all the Essays, passes my comprehension. I have not done so. I do not intend to do so. I recall your minds in a sentence or two to the actual state of the question, and leave you with a single observation thereafter.

What is our position here and now? on this earth, and for the space of some threescore and ten years which we have to spend on the earth? Are we unfallen creatures,—not guilty, depraved, condemned;—tormented, no doubt, with a plague of self within, and sadly vexed and oppressed by an Evil Spirit of selfishness tyrannising over us;—but still having near us and in us, as the root of our being, a Righteousness, a Redeemer, a strong Son of God, who has sounded the depths of all

\* This remark applies particularly to the first edition of the Essays, which alone Dr Jelf had before him, and in which the subject of the future state is not considered in a separate Essay at all, but occupies merely a few pages at the end of the Essay on the Trinity.



our experiences;—and also a Spirit coming forth from the Father and the Son, to shew us that we are all sons of God, and are all brethren? Is this our present state? And have we in prospect before us indefinite time, beyond death, in which, under a clearer light of discovery and revelation, the awful problem of God's will prevailing over ours, or our will resisting God's, may work out somehow its solution,—the loving Father's wrath against the unlovely burning on, in respect of all of us, and not quenched till its loving purpose is fulfilled? Or are we a race of respited criminals, over whom the righteous sentence of the holy and righteous God is suspended, that a dispensation of mercy may run its appointed and limited course? If this last view of our present state is the true one (and Scripture must be read backwards or written over again,—nay, the universal conscience of mankind must be annihilated,—if it is not), then how sad a thing is it to let any vague and general reasonings of ours, about what we think should be the ultimate issues of things, interfere with the urgent work of persuading the guilty criminals, whose respite is so precarious, rather to embrace the offered mercy than remain under the old condemnation, aggravated as it must be by the fresh guilt of the rejected amnesty and mercy! Shew me one hint in all the Bible of any offer of grace, or any opportunity of salvation, beyond the limits of this present life, and I will try to calculate chances for myself and my fellow-

sinners. But if you cannot, stand aside, and I also will stand aside. Let us be still. And let God himself proclaim on Sinai the threatenings of law, and fill the air round Bethlehem with the soft song of peace. Above all, let him, in the cross of his own Son, reveal the inevitable certainty of retribution—the unsearchable riches of grace.

My closing observation is a practical one. I had intended to trace slightly the author's views, as developed in this book, to some of the sources whence they might have been, if they have not been, derived. There is little or nothing that is really new in them. Mr Maurice cannot be called an original writer as to matter, though his manner and style are fresh. He is not, probably, much acquainted with the literature of Protestant theology. If he is, it is the worse for his candour; for in that case his misrepresentations are inexcusable. He writes as if the field had never been gone over before, and as if he was making discoveries; never indicating any knowledge of the fact, that all his reasonings against the current orthodox and evangelical doctrines have been anticipated and answered over and over again. I might shew the coincidence of his views as to the inward light with those of Barclay and the Friends; the extent of his obligation to Edward Irving and Thomas Erskine for his ideas of the Incarnation and Atonement; and the agreement of his opinions, on all the leading points of Christian doctrine, with those of ordinary Unitarians;

with these two exceptions: that, under whatever limitations, they admit a resurrection, a judgment, and a future state of rewards and punishments; whilst on the other hand, with whatever explanations, he asserts strongly the doctrine of the Trinity. But to return to my concluding remark;—

The heavy weight upon every thinking man's mind in connexion with this whole subject, is the sad and seemingly hopeless state of the vast multitudes, not in heathen lands only, but at our very doors, to whom there seems actually to be no opportunity given for escaping the wrath to come. How that weight should lie less oppressively on my mind if I embrace the author's view, than if I hold by the common belief of Christendom, I cannot understand;—unless I have a far clearer revelation than he can give me, of a more favourable condition of things, when life's fitful fever is over. Nor can I see any reason why men seeking to persuade their fellows to embrace an offered means of escape from coming judgment, should be more violent or more ecstatic than those who have to tell them that they are in a wrong state, and that that state, while it lasts, is hell. But this I say,—If any man accepts the Gospel as a message of mercy for himself, and rejoices in his escape from liability to condemnation, and his present possession of eternal life in the knowledge of the Son of God,—he lies under an obligation not to be measured, to go everywhere among his

fellows, that, knowing the terror of the Lord, he may persuade men. I say, moreover, that it will be foul guilt in him if he is not the foremost in every good work for rescuing society from ignorance, poverty, and crime. And I say, finally, that he has a weapon of power which none else can wield, when he has to tell of an all-sufficient Atonement, a free Justification, a full Salvation. I call upon the Evangelical Churches everywhere to arise and to do their duty in these perilous times. God expects it at their hands. "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem; loose the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion!"

## PRELIMINARY CHAPTER.

### PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE ESSAYS; PLAN OF THE PROPOSED EXAMINATION.

The Introductory Lecture on the Essays is the result of the examination of them, to which attention is now solicited. It is all the more necessary, on that account, to explain the principle upon which the examination was conducted. With that view, it may be right to submit a few remarks upon the Preface to the second edition of the Essays, prepared when the task of examining them was first undertaken. And, at the same time, it may be convenient to embrace the opportunity of indicating generally the plan, or method, of the examination itself.

DUE allowance being made for the irritation naturally caused by some not perhaps very liberal or candid criticisms on the Essays, as first published, there are traces of temper, and instances of unfairness, in this preface to the second edition, which, as affecting the author's impartiality and competency, deserve a passing notice.

Referring to a remark by a reviewer of the New Unitarian school, that "few writers ever do radically overturn any mature system of belief," the author says—"To overturn radically a mature system of belief is the very last object of my ambition" (p. 11). So he speaks

at the very outset. It is very difficult to perceive how this disavowal is to be understood, consistently with the unequivocal identification, in this very preface, of what is well known as the Evangelical system, and the vehement protest against it which is over and over again repeated. "There are some Unitarians," he adds, "and some Trinitarians also, who are not very mature in their convictions—not very settled in their belief—who have tried systems and are not content with them. To such I addressed myself. By some of these I have been understood." A "mature system of belief" is the matter in question; it is an evasion of it to speak merely of men being "not very mature in their convictions, not very settled in their belief." Doubtless, the author does apply himself to persons of that class; and whatever may be the object of his ambition, the fact is, that, in dealing with them, he does aim at overturning a mature system of belief. His whole work is an effort to get the ordinary Orthodox system, as held by the general body of Trinitarians, entirely out of the way, that he may propose what he considers a more satisfactory resting-place for those who have tried systems, and are not content with them. That he should succeed in radically overturning the belief of persons intelligently mature and settled in their convictions with regard to that system, may be neither his expectation nor his desire. Such persons, especially if they have made a full and fair trial of it, will easily detect the author's distorted

representations, and will consequently be little moved from their calm faith in the Righteousness and Atonement of the Son of God. But there is a class of men who think they 'try the spirits whether they be of God,' when in a rare moment of seriousness they consult a book or two;—or when they make a kind of desperate attempt to be convinced at all hazards of some extreme opinion,—recoiling forthwith into incredulity. They will welcome the author's assurance about not overturning a mature system of belief; they will make their own use of it. They will find in it a convenient apology for casting away their faith in what they have been taught to consider the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and persuading others to do the same; with a plausible profession, all the while, of the utmost reluctance to appear as the subverters of the established opinions of religious men. It would be far more candid on the part of this author to avow, that he means directly to assail the common well-understood creed of Orthodox and Evangelical Christendom.

Speaking still of the review of his Essays in the Unitarian Journal, he says: "It undertakes to expose the feebleness of my analysis and the unsatisfactoriness of my logic." "Very likely," he replies, "it may have succeeded. But the question at issue between us is not that at all, not whether they are good reasoners and I am a bad one, but what gospel they have to bring to mankind, what light they have to throw on the question-



ings of the human spirit, what they can shew has been done for the deliverance of our race and its members, what hope they can give us of that which shall yet be done. On that issue I am willing to put their creed and mine" (p. xii.) With all deference it is submitted that to ascertain this,—to know what I have to communicate as divine truth to mankind,—from whatever sources of information may be open to me,—good reasoning is indispensable, and feeble analysis and unsatisfactory logic are disqualifications. But the main thing to be observed here is, that apparently, the criterion of a message from God is made to be the measure in which, or the extent to which, it satisfies man's inquiries and ministers to his hope.

So also, speaking of the common orthodox system which he is opposing, he pays a somewhat suspicious compliment to the parties holding it:—"I admire unspeakably those who can believe in the love of God and can love their brethren, in spite of the opinion which they seem to cherish, that he has doomed them to destruction. I am sure that their faith is as much purer and stronger than mine, as it is than their own system." And then he adds; "But if that system does prevent me from believing that which God's Word, the Gospel of Christ, the witness of my own conscience, the miseries and necessities of the universe, compel me to believe, I must throw it off" (xxvi. xxvii.)

Is it meant that these are different kinds of evi-



dence—whose conspiring forces have power to compel belief? Am I to associate with the Word of God and the Gospel of Christ, and apparently place on the same level with them as grounds of conviction, the witness of my own conscience, and the miseries and necessities of the universe? This last is certainly a very large and wide measure of truth. I am to test a doctrine proposed for my acceptance by the miseries and necessities of the universe;—that is, evidently, by my own notion of what the universe requires. For this, it would seem that one must really be as God, knowing good and evil.

Invidious, and sometimes offensive representations of the opinions of his opponents disfigure the pages of the preface. The passage just quoted is perhaps a specimen; but there are other instances.

Is it ignorance, or a satirical vein, that makes the author speak of “the popular theory” as “gratifying to all the instincts of religious men,” because according to it “the Gospel is only a scheme for saving *them* from the ruin which God decreed for the universe when Adam sinned”? (p. xx.) Is there a courteous sarcasm in the allegation that they to whom we of “the popular theory” preach the Gospel “understand us to say that God has sent his Son into the world, not to save it, but to condemn it”? (p. xx.) Is the writer so ill-read in theology as to believe his own words when he alleges, that the explanations of Christ’s sacrifice usually given are “such as a heathen would use to defend the sacrifices

which he offers to a malignant power"? (p. xxiv.) Or does he think that it is in good taste coolly to represent the divines with whom he is contrasting himself as those who "say"—not merely who are considered by him as virtually holding, but who themselves "say—that the doctrines of the Atonement, of the Resurrection, and of the Judgment, can only be received in connexion with certain metaphysical, legal, or commercial explanations"? (p. xxv.)

These and similar remarks are spots on the surface of that charity which the work and its author claim as pre-eminently their own, and with respect to which it can scarcely be said that it vaunteth not itself. They are quite in keeping with his manner of writing in the Essays upon these subjects; but as thus thrust ultroneously into the new preface, they indicate an increasing feeling of bitterness and anger which it is by no means pleasant to observe.

There are one or two other instances also, either of the want of an exact acquaintance with the views of his opponents, or of the want of a scrupulous accuracy in stating them, which are fitted to leave a painful impression on the mind.

In speaking of the changes in the Essay on the Atonement, and "one omission" which he has "made with very great reluctance," he seems to have some reason to complain of an unfair construction put upon his quotation, in his first edition, of the collect for the

Sunday before Easter. It may be incorrect to say that he "appealed to this collect, because he regarded Christ's death not as a sacrifice, but simply as an example" (pp. xxii. xxiii.) But on the other hand, is it quite fair or correct in him to adopt the words—"a sacrifice which takes away sin,—a sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for the sins of the whole world,"—as expressive of his own view;—and that, too, without warning or explanation;—when he cannot but be aware that the common usage of language, and the unquestionable phraseology of theological writers, assign to them a very different meaning from that in which he himself employs them?

Nor is it possible to read without regret the passage in which he refers to the Bishop of Natal, Dr Colenso. Not content with claiming that prelate as holding, along with himself, "the conviction that we are living in a world which God loves, and which Christ has redeemed" (pp. xxix. xxx.)—he thinks it needful to stigmatise the evangelical men from whom he differs, by an antithesis more witty than wise, as "those who think that the world is not redeemed, that God's love is limited to a few." There may be differences among the parties alluded to, in regard to their manner of stating, and trying to solve, various difficult questions connected with the carrying out of the plan of mercy among a guilty and rebellious race. But the author surely cannot believe that any one of them would acquiesce in

those propositions which he coolly puts forward as an off-hand summary of their belief.

The author sometimes mistakes—or misstates—the exact point at issue between himself and those who are supposed to complain of him.

“It has been supposed,” he says, “that I have argued for some mitigated notion of future punishment, as more consistent with the mercy of God than the ordinary one.” “The ordinary doctrine” is one which “to him seems full of the most miserable mitigations and indulgencies for evil.” And he adds, “I plead for the love of God which resists sin, and triumphs over it, not for a mercy which relaxes the penalty of it” (p. xxvi.) The distortion and abuse of “the ordinary doctrine” may, for the present, pass. But the very contrast which he draws in this last sentence, with not a little of what he feels to be just pride, may indicate,—what will afterwards more fully appear,—that the real “supposition,” or allegation, with which he has to deal, is not that he “has argued for some mitigated notion of future punishment,” but that his view of the Gospel excludes, and he himself denies, future punishment altogether, in the true and proper sense of the term punishment, as that term is used alike in theology and in common life.

There are some other matters in this preface on which a remark or two might be made, especially in connexion with the subject of Inspiration and the doctrine of the

Atonement. But the opportunity for considering them will afterwards occur in the progress of the inquiry which it is proposed now to institute into the teaching of this book.

For the purpose of the following examination, the Essays may conveniently be grouped in classes, according to an arrangement of the topics of theology common among divines; — which indeed the author virtually follows in the most orderly manner.

In the first two Essays the source of theology on the part of God, and the source of it also on the part of man, are pointed out. In the third and fourth, the condition of man is exhibited as capable of remedy; inasmuch as on the one hand, the Evil Power that tyrannises over him is foreign to himself, and on the other hand, the protest against evil in his own bosom is not only ineradicated and ineradicable, but is identified with a present living Redeemer. The fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth Essays describe the person and work of the Redeemer. The ninth and tenth Essays trace the process of personal salvation, or emancipation. In the eleventh and twelfth, we are asked to consider what the Redeemer is now doing, and what he has yet to do, in his ascension-state and in his work of judgment. In the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, the condition of the Church under the teaching of the divine Word and Spirit is sketched; and the principle of the Church's

unity is unfolded. The sixteenth reaches the culminating point of the Trinity in Unity. The concluding Essay, the seventeenth, contemplates the future state.

Thus there are these several and successive topics discussed in their order:—

*The First*, The source of Theology ;—in the nature of God, which is love, and in the necessity of man, which is sin (Essays i. ii.)

*The Second*, The possibility of a Remedial Theology ;—the power of evil being foreign to man, and the protest against evil being inherent in man—being his living Redeemer (iii. iv.)

*The Third*, The Remedy provided ;—in the person (v. vi.) and work (vii. viii.) of the Son of God.

*The Fourth*, The Remedy applied ;—in the justification and regeneration of men (ix. x.)

*The Fifth*, The exaltation of the Redeemer to the office of Ruler and Judge (xi. xii.)

*The Sixth*, The subjection of the Church to divine guidance ; — Inspiration, — the personality and teaching of the Holy Spirit,—the Unity of the Church (xiii. xiv. xv.)

*The Seventh*, The Trinity in Unity (xvi.)

*Conclusion*, Eternal Life and Eternal Death (xvii.)

## CHAPTER I.

THE SOURCE OF THEOLOGY;—IN THE NATURE OF GOD, WHICH IS  
LOVE, AND THE NECESSITY OF MAN, WHICH IS SIN. ESSAYS I.  
AND II.

### ESSAY I.—ON CHARITY.

THE subject of this Essay is the character of God. It is as a guide or index to the character of God that the apostle Paul's praise of charity is introduced, and is made, not only the theme of the present Essay, but the key-note of the whole treatise. Carrying out the intentions of a deceased "Lady, once a member of the Society of Friends," who had desired that "some book especially addressed to Unitarians" should be prepared by him, the author thought that "a series of Discourses which had occurred to him as suitable for his own congregation, in the interval between Quinquagesima Sunday and Trinity Sunday, might embrace all the topics" which he would wish to bring under their notice (Advertisement, pp. vii. viii.) He accordingly threw the Discourses into the form of Essays; following very much the order in which the leading truths of the Gospel are exhibited in the services of the Church of



England from the beginning of the season of Lent onwards to Trinity Sunday. To this arrangement he refers in his first Essay. Having directed attention to the stress which all men of all parties are now laying upon charity, and which, he thinks, should "incline a writer of this day to begin his moral or theological discourses from charity, at whatever point he may ultimately arrive,"—as a similar motive "led one of the Reformers to speak first of faith,"—he appeals to "the doctors of the first ages, and of the middle ages," who "continually put forth the Divine Charity as the ground upon which all things in heaven and earth rest, as the centre round which they revolve." And he adds;—"What is more to the purpose, the compilers of our Prayer-book, living at the very time when faith was the watchword of all parties, thought it wise to introduce the season of Lent with a prayer and an epistle, which declare that the tongues of men and of angels, the giving all our goods to feed the poor, the giving our bodies to be burnt, finally, the faith which removes mountains, without charity, are nothing. This alone was to be the ground of all calls to repentance, conversion, humiliation, self-restraint; this was to unfold gradually the mystery of the Passion, and of the Resurrection, the mystery of Justification by faith, of the New Life, of Christ's Ascension and Priesthood, of the descent of the Spirit, of the Unity of the Church. This was to be the induction into the deepest mystery of all,



the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (pp. 6, 7).

It is not for a stranger to comment upon a view of the Church of England Prayer-book given by a clergyman. But when so much importance is attached to the selection of the Epistle of Quinquagesima Sunday, as introductory not only to Lent, but to all the Church's high days from Lent to Trinity Sunday,—one can scarcely help asking if Septuagesima Sunday, and Sexagesima Sunday, have not as direct a reference to Lent as Quinquagesima Sunday? Moreover, do not the very names of these three Sundays prove that whatever principle may have guided the compilers of the Prayer-book in fixing appropriate services for them, it must have been a principle applicable exclusively to the seven weeks of Lent and Easter, ending on Easter Sunday, and not reaching beyond it? Still further, if the Epistles and other devotions for these three Sundays, Septuagesima, Sexagesima, Quinquagesima,—be considered as preparatory to the contrition of Lent and the joy of Easter,—and nothing more,—may not a reason be found for dwelling upon the high standard of Christian responsibility and duty, at least as satisfactory as the assumption that the compilers of the Prayer-book meant the Epistle for the Sunday before Ash-Wednesday to be the starting-point of all its subsequent theology, including the Passion, the Resurrection, Pentecost, the Trinity?

This, however, is a matter of comparatively little

consequence. A more serious consideration is that by making the human character, however excellent,—and indeed one single excellent feature of that character,—the suggestive type, the mould, according to which our conceptions of the divine character are to be formed, we run the risk of these conceptions being limited, partial, one-sided. Even as a description of consummate Christian virtue, the commendation of charity is incomplete; other graces must be blended with it to constitute the perfect man in Christ. It is not a natural or direct method to overlook the express statements on the subject of the divine nature and government of which Scripture is full, to isolate a single element of human goodness however beautiful and beautifully delineated, and to resolve all the perfection of the Ruler of the universe into that. The danger seems to be all the greater, if there is to be no definition of charity,—no analysis of the apostolic account of it,—no comparison of that account with other scriptural representations;—if all criticism or inquiry of that sort is to be resented as narrowing in an intolerable manner the scope and sense of the divine word;—if, in fact, the love signalised in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians is to be regarded as of that wide and comprehensive sort which shall gather up into itself all those aspirations towards a better mutual understanding, and a larger common brotherhood, of which men's hearts are vaguely conscious. Even if that chapter were taken alone and sepa-

rately, a careful examination of the qualities ascribed to charity might bring out a view of that excellence, as belonging first to man, and then in an infinite degree to God, more pointed and precise than any of these aspirations,—than all of them together. Still it would be necessarily an imperfect view of what the moral Governor of the world is. It is even more unsatisfactory, according to the author's manner of handling the passage, and drawing forth from it the idea of the character of God. This will appear more clearly when the Essay is examined somewhat more in detail.

The opening sentence gives a portion of the noble verses in which charity is exalted above the best gifts,—the gifts most to be coveted. “St Paul says, *Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing*” (p. 1).

Those with whom the author deals are supposed to hail this as a “confession” on the part of Paul “how poor all those dogmas are on which he dwells elsewhere with so much of theological refinement; faith, which he told the Romans and Galatians, was necessary and able to save men from ruin, shrinks here to its proper dimensions, and in comparison of another excellence is pronounced to be good for nothing.” They rejoice in “what seems to them a splendid inconsistency in support of a principle which it is the great work of our age to proclaim,” leaving it to “divines to defend the apostle's consistency if they can” (p. 1).

At one time, the author intimates, he would have accepted the challenge. He would have said; "The charity which the apostle describes is not, the least that tolerance of opinions, that disposition to fraternize with all characters and creeds, which you take it to be. His nomenclature is spiritual and divine, yours human and earthly. If you could look into the real signification of this chapter, you would not find that you liked it much better than what he says of faith elsewhere" (p. 2).

He abandons "this language" now, as "impertinent and unchristian." And perhaps there is no harm in his doing so, not so much for that reason, as because the language is not particularly intelligible. It would have been but fair, however, to the apostle to explain, that the faith which he contrasts with charity in writing to the Corinthians, is not the faith which he commends in writing to the Romans and Galatians: and that the charity of the one epistle is the love by which faith is represented as working, in the others. It would have been well also if the author had said, whether or not he agrees in the sentiments supposed to be uttered by the advocates of charity as against faith. At all events, he repudiates the answer which he might once have given.

1. It may "silence an objector," he says. But it is equivalent to "telling him that the Bible means something altogether different from that which it appears to mean," and this again is equivalent to a denial of its inspiration and divine truth. "I must suppose," he

adds, "that inspired language is the most inclusive and comprehensive of all language; that divine truth lies beneath all the imperfect forms of truth which men have perceived,—sustaining them, not contradicting them." (Pp. 2, 3.) Revelation, according to him, coming in contact with a particular temper or habit in a man, a country or an age, finds in the temper or habit, whatever it may be, some partial affinity to itself. Under the influence of that temper or habit, men may "fix upon a certain aspect of the Revelation," while "another side of it is for them lying in shadow." They thus "treat it in the most sincere and natural way, accepting what in their state of mind they can most practically apprehend and use." And a teacher having strong "faith in God's revelation," and a "clear conviction that God has his own way of guiding his creatures," might "be content that they should not, for the present, try to bring" the side that is for them lying in shadow "within the range of their vision." "At all events he would feel that his work was clearly marked out for him,"—that work being "to arrive at the unknown through that which is perceived, however partially," and "not to quench the light by which any men are walking." (P. 4.)

Now if all this means merely, on the one hand, that the Bible is to be understood according to the ordinary import of the language which it employs; and on the other hand, that whatever amount of truth may be found in a man's convictions is to be taken advantage of, as

common ground, in dealing with him on behalf of Revelation ;—it is of course a correct statement, although it is little to the purpose. But there is a germ of ambiguity, if not of error, in these somewhat vague observations. If I tell a man whose only notion of charity or love is the notion of mere good-will, for example,—that this is not the charity or love of which Paul speaks,—am I therefore telling him that the Bible means something different from what it appears to mean? The question is not what the Bible appears to mean to a man fastening upon an isolated word, or sentence, and interpreting it according to some idea of his own, or of the age: but what it means to one who reads it, as he would read any other book, studying the connexion in which the word or sentence occurs, and endeavouring in the ordinary way to ascertain what idea the writer intended to convey. Nor will it do to ride off upon some transcendental theory of inspiration, as if it imparted to the language used a certain character of universality or comprehensiveness; making it, chameleon-like, assume the hue and colour of the minds with which it meets; or making it assimilate and harmonise the imperfect forms of truth which men express in still more imperfect forms of words. Inspired language is to be regarded as having a definite meaning not less than uninspired language, and is to be read and studied accordingly. If any think that they do homage to inspired language by elevating it into a region where the common laws of



criticism and interpretation, applicable to all other language, may not reach it, they are in reality betraying it with a kiss; unconsciously perhaps, and unintentionally, but yet effectually. We are asked to take the word "charity," or love, as used by Paul, for the very symbol and standard of our theology. And at the same time we are gravely warned against putting upon the word any definite meaning, and rather recommended, as it would almost seem, to avoid "looking into the real signification of the chapter" containing it; although that, after all, is the only possible method of arriving at a knowledge of the divine truth which the term "charity," as used by Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit, was really designed to teach. This is surely a large demand on our implicit faith.

2. It is so all the rather for the admissions which are made as to the spurious character of much of the charity now in vogue. "Artificial, fantastical, morbid,"—nay "compatible with a vast amount of uncharitableness,"—much of all that is felt and said and practised in this age is allowed to be. One would think that this is a good reason for seeking some surer starting-point for our theology than the word "charity," as found in an isolated verse, or half a verse, of the Apostle Paul, and interpreted by the "temper or habit" of the age. But the author has an ingenious "point" here, which he suggests for consideration. "It is true," he says, "that each school has its own notion of charity, that the defi-

nitions of it are unlike, that the limitations of it are various and capricious." But "the point to be considered is, whether all these diversities, subsisting under a common name, do not prove, more than anything else, the tendency of the time in which they are found,—the direction in which our thoughts are all moving." (P. 5.) Certainly they may prove this. But they prove also that in obeying that tendency, and moving in that direction, we are very much at sea. And surely they do not prove that we are so much at one in our ideas of what the charity we talk about and long for really is, as to be warranted in making these ideas the measure of the charity which "inspired language" praises; and dispensing with the light which a fair examination of that language might shed upon the subject.

It may be quite true that in these days, "portraits of dry, hard, cold-hearted men, who have in them, possibly, a sense of justice and right, are sure to produce a revolting, as from something profoundly and essentially evil, even in spectators who can look upon great criminals with half-admiration, as gigantic and heroical." No doubt, these are the stock characters of cheap novels and minor theatres,—the fit successors of the stern and upright father or husband, and the gay and generous libertine, who used to entertain our ancestors. Certainly "dry, hard, cold-hearted men," are anything but amiable, even though they have "a sense of justice and right." But an age which revolts from such characters,



as from something profoundly and essentially evil, and looks in preference on great criminals with half-admiration, is not precisely the best fitted for deciding, from its own sense and consciousness, and without examination of the passage, whether the charity of the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians be inclusive, or exclusive, of that "sense of justice and right" which, it seems, will not rescue a "dry, hard, cold-hearted man" from the fate of being regarded as less tolerable than a "gigantic and heroical" villain.

If the meaning of the term be first ascertained, there can be no objection to our "beginning our moral or theological discourses from charity," and ending them also in charity. "The divine charity" is to be "put forth as the ground upon which all things in heaven and earth rest, as the centre round which they revolve." (P. 6.) Not only "the doctors of the first ages and of the middle ages," but the Reformers also, rightly understood, held this view. They did not, as the author thinks, "speak first on faith." Still less did they do so for the reason he gives, "because all men, whether Romanists or Anti-Romanists, acknowledged the necessity of it." They spoke first on love; and on faith as apprehending and reproducing love; apprehending love in God; reproducing love in man. Charity—"the divine charity,"—is a good portal through which to enter into the christian temple. And it is true that "human charity is the image and counterpart of the

divine." From human charity, therefore, we may rise to a conception of the divine. But in order to this, we must know what human charity is,—the human charity which is worthy to be the image and counterpart of the divine. And surely it is safer to take our knowledge of this human charity,—especially since so much is to be made of it,—from the Word of God fairly interpreted as all spoken and written words ought to be, than from the temper and tendency of any age,—least of all an age admitted to have the name, indeed, very much in its mouth, but to be very much in the dark as to the thing.

3. Nor is the author's case the better for a further admission that it is an age impatient of "dogmas;" and in haste to grasp "some union of parties in which all barriers, theological, nay, it would seem sometimes, moral also, shall be thrown down." This "impatience of distinctions, of the distinction between Right and Wrong, as well as of that between Truth and Falsehood"—is seen to be "the greatest peril of this age," and felt to be a "temptation" against which, for ourselves and others, it is our "highest duty" to "watch." "In performance of it," he "denounces the glorification of private judgment," by which he understands the notion that we may think what we like to think; that there is no standard to which our thoughts should be conformed: that they fix their own standard." "Who," he asks, "can toil to find that which, on this supposition, he can make?" (Pp. 8, 9.) A shrewd question,

and a sharp one! If any man can be discovered who holds and glorifies this notion of private judgment, he may deal with it. Equally with this so-called private judgment,—or rather as virtually identical with it,—“the dogmatical authority of the Church” is denounced. The confusion is only worse confounded. But “if we start from the belief,—charity is the ground and centre of the universe, God is charity”—our theology becomes at once distinct and comprehensive.

Be it so. Let us start from that belief, if by charity we mean what Paul means in the thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians. In that view, the belief in question may be subdivided into several beliefs. For example;—truth is the ground and centre of the universe—God is truth. Justice is the ground and centre of the universe—God is justice. Holiness is the ground and centre of the universe—God is holiness. If charity is allowed to stand alone in the expression of the belief from which we start, it is because it is inclusive of these other attributes. If it is not to be so understood, we must refuse to start from a belief essentially defective and one-sided.

This is the vital point of the First Essay. That theology should be “regarded not as a collection of our theories about God, but as a declaration of his will and his acts toward us,”—that its articles ought to be viewed in a light fitted to bring “the divine love and human life into conjunction, the one being no longer a

barren tenet or sentiment, the other a hopeless struggle,"—these are important and seasonable observations. (Pp. 10, 11.) To acquaint himself with God and be at peace, is the highest study and happiness of man. And beyond all question, the belief that God is love lies at the root of all divine knowledge, and embraces the sum of all. But the painful doubt in which this Essay leaves us regards the nature of that charity, or love, into which the entire divine character is resolved, and from which all theology is to be elaborated:—a painful doubt indeed, and one which almost passes, before the Essay closes, into still more painful certainty.

The author, appealing, as he usually does in all his Essays, to those with a view to whose benefit they were composed, acknowledges, in the strongest terms, his obligation to "two classes of Unitarians."

The first class consists of Unitarians of the old school, who "repudiate" the Trinitarian "Articles absolutely," and "protest against them." With reference to that class, he observes, "I am not ashamed to say that the vehement denunciations of what they suppose to be the general faith of Christendom, which I have heard from Unitarians,—denunciations of it as cruel, immoral, inconsistent with any full and honest acknowledgment of the Divine Unity, still more of the Divine love,—have been eminently useful to me. I receive them as blessings from God, for which I ought to give him continual thanks." Not, he explains, "because the hearing of

these charges has set me upon refuting them,"—but "because great portions of these charges have seemed to me well-founded; because I have been compelled to confess that the evidence for them is irresistible." And that evidence, he adds, does not merely "refer to some secondary or subordinate point." "It does not touch those secret things which belong to the Lord, but the heart of that Revelation which he has made to us and to our children." These "protests" have taught him to say to himself, "Take away the love of God, and you take away everything." They have "urged him to believe that God is actually love;" and "to dread any representation of him which is at variance with this; to shrink from attributing to him any acts which would be unlovely in man." (Pp. 11-14.) If there be meaning in so unqualified an acknowledgment of obligation, and force in the appeal grounded upon it,—it must be because the view of the divine character with which the author sets out is the same as that of those Unitarians who "vehemently denounce what they suppose to be the general faith of Christendom;" and further, because the standard by which he is to try what "acts may be attributed to God," even in his character of ruler, is their opinion of what would be unlovely in man. On any other supposition, his pleading with them is insincere, or at least, irrelevant.

The other class of Unitarians to whom he addresses himself compose "the modern school." They "be-

ing less strong in condemnation of the thoughts and language of books written by Trinitarians, and avowing a sympathy with some of the accounts which they have given of their own inward conflicts, nevertheless hate orthodoxy with a perfect hatred, affirming it to be the stifler of all honest convictions and of all moral growth." From these he has learned that "if we are resting on any formulas, even the best," or "on the divinest book that was ever written by God for the teaching of mankind, and not on the living God himself, our foundation will be found sandy." (P. 13.) The reference to the Bible here is inappropriate and unmeaning, unless we are to understand that he substantially agrees with the Unitarians of the modern school, not only in their opinion of formulas, but in their opinion also of the Word of God.

It is true that the author does not intend to soothe either of these classes of Unitarians with idle compliment. He is anxious to raise them to a higher platform of religious attainment than they now occupy. Placing his foot on what he has in common with them, he would bring them on, and bring them up, to have something better in common with him. To the first class he says—Work out your own idea of the character of God,—your own belief that God is love,—and you will find that it forces you to admit that God has done and is doing more for mankind than you at present seem to think. To the second he says,—Granted that human



formulas and divine books are but shells and husks ;—only treat them fairly as such ; and they may yield to you better food and better kernels than you have yet got out of them. In particular, you will find in and under them, not “ a certain religious sentiment—a tendency, that is, a bias or aspiration of soul towards something,” but “ a Person,” “ the Deliverer and Head of mankind.” This is true. But it is not the less true, on the other hand, that the probable success, and indeed the very significancy and common sense, of this benevolent attempt, turn upon its being an admitted fact—on his part,—that he holds with Unitarians of the old school on the subject of the divine character, and with Unitarians of the new school on the subject of the Divine Word.

## ESSAY II.—ON SIN.

What is Sin?—“ Clergymen,” it seems, are apt “ to take it for granted that their congregations understand what they mean when they speak of SIN.” And they are advised to “ attend more to the doubts and objections of others,” which “ might assist in clearing and deepening their own thoughts.” (P. 18.)

What these others have to say is in substance this :—We know of crimes, or overt acts, to be “ checked by direct penalties.” We know of habits, or tendencies,



leading to these crimes, to be “extirpated by some moral influences.” For the first, we have our legislation; for the second, our ethics. But you theologians bring in a *tertium quid*,—a third notion,—which we can refer to neither head. You speak of SIN. And you say it is committed against God. You thus represent God as “wanting something for his own use and honour,—craving services and sacrifices as due to him.” “Is not doing justice and mercy to the fellow-creatures among whom he has placed us, the thing which he requires and which pleases him? If not, where would you stop?” The worst heathen notions of propitiation rush in; and “the name or word ‘Christianity’ has no charm to keep them off.” “But if once we admit good feeling and good doing towards our neighbour to be the essence and fulfilment of God’s commandments, why are not the ethical and legal conceptions of evil sufficient? What room is there for any other?” (Pp. 18, 19.)

To all this, the author represents the ordinary theological answer to be to the following effect (p. 20); *first*, that “the commandments speak of a duty towards God as well as a duty towards our neighbour;” *secondly*, that “there is no reason why he from whom we receive all things, should not demand something in return, and that *a priori* we could not the least tell whether he would or not;” *thirdly*, that “if he did, it would be reasonable to expect that he would enforce very heavy punishments upon our failure, especially if it might have been avoided;”

*fourthly*, that “those punishments may be infinite,—at all events that we can have no reason to allege why they should not be;” and *fifthly*, that “if we have any authority for supposing they will be so, we ought to do anything rather than incur so tremendous a risk.”

Such is the view which he evidently means to attribute to the theologians from whom he separates himself. If he does not intend it to be taken as his version of the current Evangelical doctrine regarding Sin,—if it is a mere caricature of some extreme opinion,—it is out of place, as well as out of taste. He plainly wishes it to be received as the account which theologians give of the “third notion,” which the objectors complain of as being “thrust upon them,” and as being “one which they can refer to the head neither of legislation nor of ethics.”

It is surely unnecessary to point out the unfairness of such a representation. Has the author read the summary of the Ten Commandments given by our Lord himself? Who are they by whom “we have been told, perhaps,” that for anything we know God may be an hard master, and that upon a calculation of risks and chances, it may upon the whole be safest to act towards him as if he were? By whom is it maintained that our duty to God is founded on his gifts to us, and is a sort of mercenary return or requital which he exacts for these gifts? To whom does the author venture to impute the offensive, if not blasphemous, opinion, that God resents our withholding of the service which he

claims, as a personal injury to himself, or enforces the rendering of that service by heavy,—possibly infinite,—punishments, like a tyrant, merely for his own sake, and because the service is his right? He can scarcely fail to know that, according to the concurrent doctrine of the theologians on whom he is reflecting, the duty which God requires of man is made to rest on a far higher ground, and is itself of a far higher nature, than he has indicated. ‘*My son, give me thy heart,*’ is the claim which God asserts. Obedience from the heart is due to him simply as our Maker, our Ruler, our Lord. And the necessity of punishment, strictly so called, in case of disobedience, arises not out of such considerations as are put into the mouth of the parties to whom the author is opposed, but out of the essential character of God, as holy, just, and true, and the essential nature of that moral government which, as the righteous Lawgiver and Judge, he exercises over his reasonable and responsible creatures. The author would not probably admit these views, even as thus stated, to be correct. But it is, at any rate, thus that they are to be correctly stated; and when thus correctly stated, it will be found that they cannot be quite so easily disposed of as the extravagance which he adroitly substitutes in their place. To return, however, to his own line of thought.—

Of course, “there is a horror and heart-shrinking from the doctrine that we are to serve God because we are ignorant of his nature and character”—as also “from

the doctrine that we are to serve him because, upon a fair calculation, it appears likely that this course will answer better than the opposite course, or that that will involve us in ruin." Certainly the man is right who says, "I cannot be religious on these terms,—it is my religion to repudiate them." (P. 20.) Such a man, the author seems to think, "may not prize the commandments very highly." Perhaps he means that in the judgment of the theologians whom he is opposing, such a man would be set down as one who did not prize the commandments very highly. He cannot intend seriously to assert that a man does not prize highly both the law and the gospel when "he feels that by duty to God Moses meant something wholly and generically different from this"—from service upon the terms which he himself repudiates: and when he "is sure that Christ did not come into the world to tell men that they cannot know anything of their Father in heaven; or that he is to be served for hire, or through dread of what he will do to them." (P. 21.)

But now, this *monstrum horrendum* of the theologians being disposed of, what is our friend, with his "direct penalties for checking crimes," and his "moral influences for extirpating habits," to do? He is to "keep his ethical or his legal doctrine, if he really has some grasp of it, not exchange it for any which has a greater show and savour of divinity." But he is "conjured not to bar his soul against the entrance of another conviction,

if it should come at any time with a very mighty power, because he is afraid that he is receiving some old tenet of theology which he has dreaded and hated." (P. 21.)

The passage in which the entrance of this other conviction into the soul is described is one of rare eloquence,—the eloquence of deep and true feeling. I am first confronted, face to face, with my own "dark self." Here am I, doing a wrong act, thinking a wrong thought; the wrong act,—the wrong thought is mine; "evil lies not in some accidents, but in me." There "comes a sense of Eternity, dark, unfathomable, hopeless." "That Eternity stands face to face with me; it looks like anything but a picture; it presents itself to me as the hardest driest reality. There are no *images* of torture and death. *What matter where, if I be still the same?*—this question will be the torture; all death lies in that." "When once a man arrives at this conviction," the author goes on to say, "he is no more in the circle of outward acts, outward rules, outward punishments; he is no more in the circle of tendencies, inclinations, habits, and the discipline which is appropriate to them. He has come unawares into a more inward circle,—a very close, narrow, dismal one, in which he cannot rest, out of which he must emerge." This he can do only "when he begins to say, 'I have sinned against some Being,—not against society merely, not against my own nature merely, but against another to whom I was bound.' And the emancipation will not

be complete till he is able to say,—giving the words their full and natural meaning, ‘FATHER, I have sinned against thee.’” (Pp. 22, 23.)

Here then are two parties. Here am I myself, doing wrong, thinking wrong. Here am I, not merely liable to evil as an accident, but having evil in me. Here am I, an evil thing,—an evil being,—with eternity around me. And here also is the Being against whom I have sinned, the Being to whom I was bound, the Being to whom I say, Father. This is death. This also is life.

One shrinks from breaking in upon the stillness of so solemn an interview with any questions. But it is necessary, as before, to ask if this vivid representation of sin is intended to be inclusive, or exclusive, of the ideas of legislation and of ethics with which the Essay opens? When in the view of eternity I meet, face to face, the Being, the Father, against whom I have sinned,—what is it that I am conscious of? Is it crime deserving punishment? Is it habit,—a habit of thinking and feeling, needing to be somehow thoroughly changed? If not, what is it? In the presence of this Being, this Father, am I a criminal? am I a prodigal? Am I both?—or either? If not, what am I?

There is nothing in the author’s account of conviction of sin which expressly denies that a sense of criminality, and a sense of estrangement or enmity, are parts or elements of that conviction. Manifestly, however, he means to transfer the question of what sin is, away



from the level ground of human legislation and human ethics, into some higher region of thought and feeling. And so far, he is right. Theology, or the knowledge of God, unquestionably opens a new sphere to the mind and heart of man. But is it not a sphere in which the radical and essential principles, both of legislation and of ethics, are as applicable and operative as in the lower sphere of man's walk among his fellows?

I discover God. He summons me to meet him. He summons me to meet him as a Father,—as my Father,—having a father's love to me. And I have sinned against him. Have I no feeling that I deserve punishment,—that I am guilty? Have I no impression of my having displeased and offended him? Have I no grief on account of my habit of suspicion, or of dread, or of dislike, towards him? I do not get rid of legislation or of ethics when I come to own, under a sense of eternity, my relation to the Supreme. On the contrary, I then first reach the heart both of legislation and of ethics. I find myself face to face with the everlasting God,—myself alone with him alone. I see him as a Father, entitled to all a father's honour, full of all a father's affection. In my apostasy from him, I recognise a crime,—the crime of crimes,—the crime of which all other crimes are but faint types. In my disaffection towards him, I feel a habit,—habit the most inveterate as well as the most inexcusable,—habit which a divine power and divine influences alone can extirpate.



Even if it turn out, after all, that “doing justice and mercy to my fellow-creatures” is the thing which he requires,—that “good feeling and good doing towards my neighbour is the essence and fulfilment of God’s commandments,”—still, I must now feel that I owe these duties not to men only, but to God. They may constitute the whole of what I owe to God. At all events, it is to God that I owe them. And when conviction of sin seizes me,—and I meet God, as my Father, under it,—he may deal with me exclusively about my ill-will toward my brethren. But must he not deal with me about it as sin against himself? And can I feel that he does so, without feeling also, that it is a crime to be punished,—that it is also a habit to be eradicated?

In every view, conviction of sin against God our Father, if it is really genuine and in the truest sense natural, must be the same in kind with conviction of sin against our brethren of mankind. It must have in it, therefore, both a sense of ill-desert, and a sense of ill-affection. Whatever else it may be, surely sin is both crime and habit. To be convinced of sin, is to be convinced of crime deserving punishment, and of habit needing to be revolutionised. In the presence of my Father in heaven, with my “dark self” haunting me, and dark eternity facing me, I am deeply conscious of guilt lying upon me, and evil dwelling in me. And I am so all the rather, because in him whom I call

Father I recognise not only a being whose very name is Love, but a sovereign Lawgiver and righteous Judge.

The inadequacy of the author's representation of sin will appear more clearly, perhaps, from a survey of the remaining portion of this Essay.

In reply to a suggestion that the experience which he has been describing,—the “dark sense of contradiction” into which a man is brought when he is “confronted with himself” and made to “see a dark image of Self, behind him, before him, beneath him,”—may after all be “the idiosyncrasy of a few strange inexplicable temperaments,”—with which busy men in a busy world have little sympathy,—the author rightly pronounces it to be “that which besets us all.” (Pp. 24, 25.) “That sense of a sin intricately, inseparably interwoven with the very fibres of their being, of a sin which they cannot get rid of without destroying themselves, does haunt those very men who you say take no account of it.” And it lays them open to “all deceits and impostures,”—to influences of all sorts, religious, philosophical, literary; for “the preachers of religion have not a monopoly of these influences at this time; here, as elsewhere, there is unrestricted competition; Mormonists, Animal Magnetists, Rappists, take their turn with us, and often work their charms more effectually than we work ours.” From this free trade in quackery, the author would protect us, by laying open the real nature and right remedy of the disorder to which it appeals.

“Men are dwelling in twilight;” and therefore “all ghosts of the past, all phantoms of the future, walk by them.” The question is, “how they can come out of the twilight.” And the answer apparently is this:—“The darkness which is blended with the light must, in some way, be shewn to be in deadly contrast with it,—the opposites must be seen one against the other.” (P. 26). This is illustrated by a reference to the success of the first Methodist movement. “Think of any sermon of a Methodist preacher which roused the heart of a Kingswood collier, or of a dry, hard, formal man, or of a contented, self-righteous boaster of his religion, in the last century. You will say the orator talked of an infinite punishment which God might inflict on them if they continued disobedient. He may have talked of that, but he would have talked till doomsday if he had not spoken another language too, which interpreted this, and into which the conscience rapidly translated it.”

What the orator really talked of was—the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and the mercy of God also revealed from heaven in the gospel of his grace. He told collier, formalist, self-righteous boaster,—all alike,—that they were guilty and needed pardon,—that they were corrupt and needed renovation,—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,—to give himself a ransom for them. He exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. But take the author’s

representation of the orator's talk,—that which he puts into the mouth of those with whom he is reasoning.

What the preacher might say of future punishment is interpreted by “another language,” into which “the conscience rapidly translated it.” And what is that other language? “He spoke of an infinite *Sin*: he spoke of an infinite *Love*; he spoke of that which was true then, whatever might become true hereafter. He said, ‘Thou art in a wrong state: hell is about thee. God would bring thee into a right state; he would save thee out of that hell.’ The man believed the words; something within him told him they were true, and that for the first time he had heard truth, seen truth, been himself true.” There may have been “vanities and confusions afterwards, coming to him from his own dreams or the crudities of his teachers.” But “this was not a delusion—could not be. He *had* escaped from the twilight: he *had* seen the opposite forms of light and darkness no longer miserably confused together. Good was all good; evil was all evil: there was war in heaven and earth between them; in him, even in him, where the battle had been fiercest, the odds against good greatest, good had gotten the victory. He had a right to believe that the morning stars were singing together at the news of it; otherwise, why was there such music in his, the Kingswood collier's, heart?” (Pp. 26, 27.)

Even at the risk of marring such harmony of the spheres—such melody in the heart,—the view of the

gospel here given must be characterised as strange and novel ; especially strange and novel to be propounded by one professing adherence to primitive Christianity and admiration of early Methodism. If it were necessary to pronounce a full and final judgment upon it at this stage of the inquiry, a rigid examination, first of its meaning, and secondly of its merits, would be indispensable. For that end, the really fine poetry into which the author makes the conscience of the Kingswood collier rapidly translate the preaching of his orator, must be re-translated, more slowly, into plain prose. In particular, let the idea of sin,—the sin of man,—which is implied in it, be specially noticed. The blending of light and darkness,—the confounding together of good and evil,—is our sin : the separation of them is our salvation. Or rather, perhaps, the mixture and confusion of light and darkness—of good and evil,—is the “ wrong state ” in which we are ; and the extrication of the light from the darkness,—the good from the evil,—with the accompanying assurance that even where the odds against good were the greatest, good has gotten the victory,—this is the “ right state into which God would bring us.” Our “ wrong state ” is twilight,—the blending of light and darkness. It is suspense between good and evil ;—it is good and evil held, as it were, in solution. To rectify our state,—to constitute the right state into which God would bring us,—what is needed is an illumination which will make darkness flee before

the light ;—a precipitate which will cause the evil and the good to part company and take opposite forms, as the solution in which they were combined is dissolved, and its antagonist elements come out from one another, wide as the poles asunder.

Now it is unquestionably true that this blending of light and darkness,—this confounding of good and evil,—is one of the most marked and characteristic features of our “wrong state.” Isaiah seems to indicate this when he says:—‘Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.’ It is true, also, that if we are to be “brought into a right state,” an indispensable step, if not the first step, is our being made to see and discern, to apprehend and feel, the difference between light and darkness,—between good and evil. In the chaos of my moral disorder and disorganisation; the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters—the waves and billows of God which have gone over me; God says, ‘Let there be light.’ He sees the light, that it is good. He divides the light from the darkness,—the good light from the evil darkness. ‘I consent unto the law that it is good;’ ‘I delight in the law of God after the inward man;’—here is the light, which is good. And it makes the darkness visible—palpable;—‘evil is present with me;’ ‘the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.’ The light, which is good, discovers and renders more

intense and thick the darkness, which is evil. But this searching, discriminating process, though essential to my emancipation, is not itself my emancipation. My apprehension of the light,—the good,—opens up to me a new sight, and imparts to me a new sense, of the darkness,—the evil. It is twilight no longer. Light and darkness are not now blended. Good and evil are not now confounded. Is this enough? Am I delivered? Am I emancipate and free? Far from it. The darkness, in contrast with the light, is only the more thickened into darkness which can be felt. The evil, rejected—condemned—by the good, is more and more to me a body of death, from which, ‘who shall deliver me?’ I must sound the depth of the darkness which the light exposes: I must know the secret power of the evil which the good condemns. I find that secret power in the fact that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing, that sin dwelleth in me; in the fact also that I am guilty, that I lie under the sentence which guilt righteously deserves. Nor is there any liberty for me until I am enabled to perceive how ‘there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.’

This was the preaching of the Methodists from the first. It is so still. Of course it is a testimony to all alike, whether openly wicked, or hard and dry formalists, not only that they may be punished hereafter, but that they are now in a wrong state. It is a testimony also



that God would bring them into a right state. It severs, moreover, light and darkness,—good and evil,—thoroughly and for ever. But it answers, more categorically than the author is inclined to answer, the question,—wherein does the darkness,—wherein does the evil,—consist? It specifies guilt and enmity,—guilt before God, enmity against God,—as the elements of this darkness, this evil. It proclaims loudly that no mere discovery of the darkness as distinct from the light,—of the evil as separated from the good,—will meet the case; such discovery can only aggravate the helpless and hopeless misery of the man in whom, and over whom, the darkness—the evil—reigns. The preaching in question announces as the source of light—of good—a definite procedure on the part of God, for expiating the guilt and overcoming the enmity. And through that procedure it proclaims that even in him in whom the odds against the good are the greatest, the good may get the victory.

It is very important to observe thus early in the examination of these Essays, the author's view of the condition of man, as a sinner. He is in a wrong state, because he does not rightly know the state in which, if he would but see it, he actually is, and consequently is not true to himself, or to it. What is wrong about him is righted, not by any act or work of God altering his condition, but by his being made to see what he really is. He is brought into a right state by illumination merely, not by redemption and regeneration, in the plain popular

and theological meaning of these terms. That upon any view of man's case illumination is necessary, all of course must admit. There must be a clearing up of the dim mist and haze which has settled thick upon our range of spiritual vision : the twilight must be chased away before the rising of the Sun of righteousness ; and the eye must be purged, and the senses exercised, to discern both good and evil. But the question is,—What does this illumination disclose ? What discovery does it make to me of my position and standing as a subject of the moral government of God,—of my character or habit of mind as an intelligent creature of God, bound to love, honour, and obey him with all my heart ? According to the author, the extrication of the good out of its confusion with the evil, is not only a preliminary to the good in me getting the victory, through my acquiescence in God's way of dealing with the evil ; it is in itself alone the cause of the victory ; or rather it is the manifestation of the victory as already got. In the dark twilight, I fight as one that beateth the air, in a mingled crowd of fair friends and ugly foes, whose forms and features I cannot discriminate, and in whose promiscuous riot I am apt to be overcome. But the day dawns ; the shadows flee away : and lo ! I find myself,—the good in me,—conqueror in the strife and master of the field. Evidently the author's view is inconsistent with the idea of there being any radical and essential disorder or derangement in man's relation to God, and in the state of

his affections towards God, such as needs to be not merely discovered, but remedied and rectified. And therefore it is not surprising that he finds no room in his theology, for any mention of the Fall, or any estimate of its consequences.

The early triumphs of Methodist preaching were notoriously based upon appeals to the conscience. The "orator" spoke to men as criminals; guilty, condemned, depraved. Their own hearts confessed the charge to be true. The Holy Spirit convinced them. They were told that God in love had given his Son to die in their stead, and was giving his Spirit to make them new creatures in his Son. They believed that there was a righteous pardon for their deep guilt, and a complete renewal for their impure and unholy nature, in Christ presented to them in the gospel. And this faith was their victory. So the first Methodists succeeded. And if their descendants, and other modern preachers, have failed in comparison with them,—whatever else may be the cause,—it cannot be their having dwelt too much or too articulately on the guilt which lies on men, and the moral corruption which characterises them, as a race of intelligent creatures, fallen and depraved.

But the author thinks he can explain this comparative failure on our part, in effecting the "processes" which were common in the first days of Methodism. We "fancy," it seems, "that the mere machinery, whether earthly or divine, which they put in motion, was the

cause of them." "We do not thoroughly understand or heartily believe that there is that war of Life and Death, of Good and Evil, now in every man's heart, as there was of old. Therefore we do not speak straightly and directly to both. We suppose men are to be shewn by arguments that they have sinned, and that God has a right to punish them. We do not say to them, 'You are under a law of love; you know you are, and you are fighting with it.'" (P. 27.)

Now, in the first place, what is this "mere machinery, whether earthly or divine?" The earthly machinery of Methodist arrangements and customs, one can understand. But what is the divine machinery alluded to? Is it the divine plan for expiating guilt by the substitution of the Eternal Son in the room of the guilty,—and for renewing the nature by the creative energy of the Holy Spirit? Again, secondly, who refuses to recognise the inward struggle in every man's heart, and to address as directly as he can the conscience and the will—the principal parties in the strife? But chiefly, in the third place, what do I really mean when I say to my fellow-men, as the author would have me to say, "You are under a law of love: you know you are, and you are fighting with it?" You are under a law of love. The moral law,—the law of the ten commandments,—the law whose sanction is a curse, or sentence of condemnation, upon all transgressors of it,—is a law of love. The Gospel,—the word of reconciliation,—the message of

mercy,—is a law of love. You are under both; under the one law, to be for ever lost; under the other law, if you will but believe, to be saved. But neither of these is the law of love which the author has in his view. His law of love is like the law of gravitation;—it is like one of the laws of extension in space, or proportion in numbers. It is that absolute love which is the very nature, and the whole nature, of God,—working itself out,—unfolding and developing itself along the stream of time. You are under it, as you are under the law that regulates the fall of a loose wall or a slanting tower. You are fighting with it, as you might fight with that other law, if you were to linger within reach of the impending ruin. But in either case, you have only to recognise the law,—the order of nature;—the law or order of material nature in the one case, the law or order of the divine nature in the other case;—and immediately you are in a safe position, or in a safe direction.

In a subsequent Essay the author refers, with a qualified commendation, to Combe's treatise on *The Constitution of Man*. The object of that treatise is to resolve all man's obligation and responsibility into what may be held to be implied in his subjection to physical laws. The author does not approve of that theory; he thinks that man has elements in his composition which reach beyond mere physical laws. Man is under higher laws; he is under a law of love. But after all, are not these laws of the same kind? They are facts connected

with actual substances or subsistences near us, touching us, affecting us for weal or woe;—facts which it concerns us to know and turn to account. Gravitation is thus a fact or law in the nature of matter; love is a fact or law in the nature of God. To be fighting with either of these facts or laws, is to be mad and to be miserable. To be falling in with what is fact and law, is always wise and safe. Owning the fact or law of gravitation in the nature of matter, I neither stumble on the rough road nor am crushed under toppling towers. Owning the fact or law of love in the nature of God, I cease to be a selfish, and become a loving, being. They are both of them laws, in the same sense; and the violation of either of them is, in the same sense as the violation of the other, wrong. There may be a difference of degree; the wrong of the one violation may be greater than that of the other; to fight with the law of love in the nature of God may be stigmatised as sin; to fight with the law of gravitation in the nature of matter may be more mildly characterised as imprudence. Still it does not appear that, on the author's shewing, there is more room for legislative and moral government, properly so called, in our relation to God, than in our connexion with matter. Responsibility, guilt, condemnation, judgment, are as unmeaning terms in his theology as in the philosophy of Combe. When the philosophy of Combe on the subject of physical law satisfies the common sense of mankind, the theology of the author on the subject



of sin may possibly approve itself to their conscience.

In closing this Essay, the author returns apparently to the ideas of legislation and ethics with which he set out. "Benevolent men wish that the poor should know more of legislation and ethics and economy." By all means the author would have it so. Better "what is sincerely communicated to them of Economics or Physics" than "insincere artificial theological teaching." At the same time, you must "point men to the deeper springs of humanity, from which both ethics and laws and economics must be fed, if they are to have any freshness or life." Otherwise, even with "Physical Science" along with them, they "may themselves contribute to the foundation of superstitions, if the man is not first called into life to receive them and to connect them with himself." We must "call forth the heart and conscience of men, so that being first able to see their Father in heaven truly, and themselves in their true relation to him, they may afterwards investigate the conditions under which they themselves, his children, exist, and the laws which govern all his works." (Pp. 27-29.) Here again the author's view comes out,—that men do not need to be brought into a new relation to God, but only to see in what relation they already actually are to him. Almost all that he says, however, on the subject of what is often called secular knowledge, is valuable and seasonable. And so also, apparently, are the remarks which



follow as to the increasing importance, in modern times, of social questions and social aspects of duty :—"Men are evidently more alive now to their social than to their individual wants ; they are therefore more awake to the evils which affect society, than to those which affect their own souls." (P. 29.) But he adds an observation not very intelligible : " To him who merely, or mainly, preaches about the soul, this is a most discouraging circumstance." Why ? Is there anything anti-social in our endeavouring to enforce our Lord's question, ' What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ' Or is the author's remark merely one of his pleasant off-hand hits against evangelical preaching, not to be considered too curiously ? To preach about the soul is, perhaps, according to his idea of it, to tell a man that he is himself in a position involving both criminality and ruin, and that his first and most urgent concern is to be himself saved. This, one would think, was what Peter did when ' with many words he testified and exhorted, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.' It is probable that he would say the same thing were he preaching now ; nor in thus preaching would he be greatly discouraged by the circumstance that men in these days are so much alive and awake to the evils which affect society. Doubtless, he would recognise that circumstance, as the author does ; he would take advantage of it and turn it to the best ac-

count ; although he might not deal with it precisely as the author does.—How does the author deal with it?

“The sense of sin” is still a profound “sense of solitude.” But it may “come to a man” most fully, “in all its painfulness and agony” when he recollects “how he has made himself alone, by not confessing that he was a brother, a son, a citizen.” “I believe,” the author adds, “the conviction of that Sin may be brought home more mightily to our generation than it has been to any former one ; and that a time will come, when every family and every man will mourn apart, under a sense of the strife and divisions of the body politic which he has contributed to create and to perpetuate.” “The priest and the prophet will confess that they have been greater rebels against the law of love than the publican and the harlot, because they were sent into the world to testify of a Love for all, and a Kingdom for all, and they have been witnesses for separation, for exclusion, for themselves.” (Pp. 29, 30.) Those “who merely, or mainly, preach about the soul,” are evidently the parties here denounced. It would be vain to tell the author that they do testify of a love for all, and a kingdom for all ; for they say, ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life ;’ and they warn hypocrites and unbelievers, as the Lord did, that ‘the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before them.’ They presume to think that they

are thus witnesses, not for exclusion, but against it ; and that the message which they have to deliver is fitted, as it is intended, first to reconcile men to God, and then to reconcile them to one another. Of course this does not satisfy the author. According to him, any doctrine which implies that men are called to come into a new state,—a new relation to God ;—and that those who do so come are on a different footing with God from that on which those who refuse to come are ;—however wide, unrestricted, unreserved, universal and free, the call may be ;—is a doctrine of separation,—of selfishness. There will be other occasions for bringing this out more fully. For the present, it is more to the purpose to remark, that conviction of sin against the second great commandment of the law, which enjoins equal love of our neighbour,—as well as conviction of sin against the first, which enjoins supreme love to God,—is really nothing more than our being made to see and feel that we have been going against a general law of being,—the law of love. There is still no acknowledgment whatever of guilt, criminality, corruption,—in connexion with rebellion against that law,—essentially different from what may be said to belong to rebellion against any other law of nature. There is room, indeed, for much difference in the measure of regret, sorrow, shame, compunction, with which I reflect upon my rebellion against different natural laws ; according to their different degrees of importance in themselves ; or with reference to the parties with

whom they connect me. In this view, my grief for my rebellion against the law of love, which should bind me to my brethren, to my Father, will be far more poignant and penitential than my grief for having violated any lower and narrower law of sensient or intelligent being. But that is all. Law, in its truest and highest sense, as the exponent and the instrument of authoritative moral government, is not admitted into the author's theory. Sin is not, with reference to that sense of it, the transgression of the law.

Unitarians of both schools are appealed to at the close of the Essay. Those "of the older school knew something of transgression; almost nothing of Sin. But the transgression was of a rule rather than of a law; breaches of social etiquette and propriety, at most uncomely and unkind habits, seemed to compose all the evils they took account of, which did not appear in the shape of crimes." (P. 32.) Why does the author contrast "rule" and "law,"—"the transgression of a rule" and "the transgression of a law?" A rule implies a ruler; and the transgression of a rule is an offence with which the ruler may and must deal as one having authority; either judicially condemning and pronouncing sentence, or in the exercise of mercy remitting the sentence. The transgression of a law, as the author seems to accept the term, may entail sad consequences upon the transgressor; and expose him, if it be the law of love, to the wrath of Him who is love.

This, however, may be altogether apart from any judicial reckoning with him,—any trial or condemnation. Admit that the law of love is administered by God as a ruler, in precisely the same sense in which the law of the land is administered by its governors and judges; and the author's system of divinity must be reconstructed from the beginning.

The low tone and standard of the old-school Unitarian theology, in its estimate of duty and of sin,—as well as in its idea that relaxation of duty and allowance for sin constitute redemption,—cannot satisfy the author's tastes and tendencies. The old "sleepy talk" to "sleepy congregations," about "a God who was willing to forgive if men repented,"—a sort of talk for which he takes just blame to the orthodox as well as the Unitarians,—will not now suffice. "Try what repentance can. But what can it, if one cannot repent?" There must be a revelation, or movement, on the part of God,—or both,—causing the repentance required. Nor is the author content to fall in with the vague and impersonal recognition of spiritual power, which Unitarians of the new school own. He asks the old school to carry out their acknowledged idea of God as a father; and the new school to confess, not influences merely, but a person. "We have an enemy who tries to deprive us even of necessities." (P. 32.) The necessities are the essential elements of a right state and standing with God, as opposed to the "religion,—apparently a graceful and refined

one,"—which might be "a luxury if we could afford it." Upon this issue with the younger Unitarians the author is prepared to do battle. An enemy is trying to deprive us of necessities; and, "unless you can teach us how to procure them in spite of him, I and my fellow-fighters must for the present let your religion alone." (P. 32.)

Thus this Essay on Sin closes; ushering in the Essay on the Evil Spirit. The doctrine of the personality and power of the Evil Spirit is to explain the condition in which man is, as needing a Redeemer, and ready to welcome, in that character, a righteous Lord of his being—a Son of God.

## CHAPTER II.

THE GROUNDS OR ORIGINAL ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY AS A  
REMEDIAL SYSTEM.—ESSAYS III. IV.

### ESSAY III.—ON THE EVIL SPIRIT.

THE third and fourth Essays may be conveniently considered in connexion with one another. They correspond and fit into one another. Two powers or persons are contending for the possession of man,—the Evil Spirit,—the living Redeemer. Both are near him, the one to be resisted—the other to be owned. Hence two elements of hope arise out of the twilight as it parts into darkness and light. There is a Prince of darkness whom I may defy; because he is not my righteous Lord, but a usurping tyrant. There is an Angel of light, a Sun of righteousness, a living Redeemer, whom I may find closer to me than the Evil Spirit,—in me,—nigh me,—at my heart. Thus, upon a double view of it,—a view of it on both sides,—my case, as a sinner, is seen to admit of a remedy.

The subject of the existence and agency of the Evil Spirit is treated of in connexion with the subject of



human depravity. It is not, however, brought in to account for that depravity historically, through any such transaction as the temptation of man in innocence and the ruin in which his compliance involved him. The Fall is not recognised at all in this Essay. The author takes man as he finds him, and contemplates his present relation to the Evil Spirit. It might seem only reasonable to inquire, in this discussion, whether there is any difference between what was man's position with reference to the Evil Spirit before the Fall, and what is his position now:—and if so, what the difference is? The author avoids that inquiry. He simply views man as he is. Man sins: he violates the law of love; of that love which is the very nature of God. Is there any explanation to be given of this fact?—any explanation which, without in the least justifying or making light of it, may nevertheless, by discovering an enemy who has done this, awaken a wholesome feeling of indignant resistance? Such is the practical use which the author would make of the doctrine concerning the Evil Spirit, as developed and applied in this Essay.

That this is a legitimate use to make of that doctrine, and one fruitful of not a little both of encouragement and of reproof,—is readily admitted, and may be more fully illustrated as the examination of the Essay proceeds. The more immediate point for consideration, however, is whether the doctrine, according to the author's view of it, really solves and satisfies the

experience with regard to sin on which he brings it to bear? It is to that point chiefly that attention must now be directed.

The connexion in which the author introduces the doctrine, and the use which he means to make of it, may partly account for what otherwise seems somewhat strange;—the apparent confusion of two very distinct topics which may be traced throughout the Essay. In the opening paragraph itself, there is a fallacy or ambiguity,—a sort of play upon words,—which might be regarded in other circumstances as of little consequence. But as affecting the credit due to the author as a theological writer, and as throwing light upon many of his subsequent statements, it deserves at least a passing notice.

The “origin of Evil,” is the question raised in the first sentence. It is an old controversy,—a controversy of centuries. And as such, being still as unsettled as ever, it is apt to be rather unceremoniously shelved. But this cannot be; the author cannot allow it; he must of necessity reopen it. He must do so, because practically all mankind are debating it, if not among themselves, at least each within his own breast. “We *must* consider the origin of evil, whether we like it or not.” (Pp. 33, 34.)

Now this is either not very intelligent, or it is hardly fair. The author can scarcely be altogether ignorant that, under the phrase, “the origin of evil,” he is con-

founding two very different questions. And it is not pleasant to find him adroitly substituting the one for the other; especially when the account to which he turns the substitution comes to be observed.

The two questions are easily distinguished. The one refers to the entrance of evil into the universe; the other, to the rise and progress of evil in the individual. The one may be said to be metaphysical; the other, psychological. The difficulty in the one case is to explain how, under a government of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, evil has intruded itself into the creation of God. The difficulty in the other case is to account for the admitted prevalence of evil over all the race of man, and in every individual of that race, by referring this universal effect to a common cause. The author raises the first question, and without warning slides into the second.

The convenience of this procedure becomes apparent before the Essay is far advanced. I am told that I cannot evade the inquiry as to the origin of evil. I follow the author into that inquiry. I find that under that name, he discusses quite another subject. It is not how evil came to be; but how I come to be evil. The subject, however, is full of interest. I wish to know what is the reason why I am the evil being that I am. And the reason, it seems, is that there is another evil being, prior to me, and independent of me, to whom somehow I am subject. This reason is commended as

more satisfactory than the doctrine of my having inherited a depraved nature. And it is thus that the problem of the origin of evil is solved.

With all deference, it may be submitted that the theory of native depravity, and the theory of universal subjection to a depraved power, are nearly equally valuable for settling the real question about the origin of evil. In plain terms, neither the one nor the other is of any value whatever. They refer, both of them, to a far lower question; which, however, far more nearly touches human experience and the human heart, and into which, accordingly, the author enters very fully.

It being admitted, then, that evil is universal among men;—that every individual man is evil;—to what are we to trace this common feature of the race?

1. It cannot be ascribed to the external world in which men live. "The conclusion, that all evil has its origin in circumstances; that if you make *them* good, you make men good,"—cannot be maintained. Peculiar temperament,—birth and breeding,—associations at home and abroad,—as well as various other "items" and contingencies,—do indeed make up "an enormous calculation," if we would estimate the influences by which character is formed. But the author passes all of them in review before him, and concludes that evil is not thus to be accounted for. It is not by any means that he underrates these influences or is insensible to their power. On the contrary, he gives a just and eloquent sketch of

the different positions in which men are placed, and shews how, almost inevitably, it is to a large extent by the peculiarities of these different positions that men are made what they are. He allows that it is very natural for a man to plead these peculiarities of his position in his own defence when he is charged with being wrong, or doing wrong. "Has he not a right to do so? Can he not prove his case?" And if "we reason in this way about ourselves, can we refuse the advantage of the same plea to our fellows?" Moreover, "if we are aroused to exertion respecting ourselves or our brethren, it appears as if we directly applied this doctrine to practice." We seek for ourselves or for our brethren a change of position, as all but indispensable to a change of conduct. "There are forms of government and forms of belief which we wish to see destroyed, because we suppose individual morality can scarcely exist under their shadow." Still, granting that all this and more may be said for the opinion of those who would make men good by making the circumstances around them good, the author cannot go along with them so far as they would carry him. (Pp. 35-37.)

2. Let another method, therefore, be tried. If circumstances make so many evil impressions, there must, many think, be a susceptibility of evil impressions in man. "They cannot persuade themselves that human creatures would receive so many evil impressions from the surrounding world, if there was not in them some

great capacity for such impressions." "The bad circumstances" cannot "produce the susceptibility to which they appeal, however they may increase it. How, they ask, did the circumstances become bad?" Are the elements good, but ill-combined? What, or who put them out of order? Is there "some one of them that was bad and disturbed the rest? That one must have become so, independently of its circumstances. There must be some evil, which was not made so by the accidents which invested it." And if so, may it not be "reasonable" to say "that this evil belongs to the very nature of man, that it is a corruption of blood?" "Confess that the infection you speak of is in us all, confess that we are members of a depraved race, and you can explain all the phenomena you take notice of; on any other hypothesis they are incomprehensible." (Pp. 37, 38.)

This is evidently meant to be a correct representation of the common theological doctrine respecting man as a fallen being. The correctness of it may be admitted, so far as it goes. It omits, indeed, all recognition of the element of guilt and condemnation, as demanding judicial treatment on the part of a righteous Ruler. And it consequently overlooks the explanation of existing phenomena which is furnished by the doctrine, that men are living under a dispensation in which judgment is postponed, with a view to definite proposals of mercy. But such as it is, let it in the meanwhile be accepted.



“This view of the origin of evil is pregnant,” the author says, “with practical consequences; it never can become a mere theory.” May the corruption be cured? Is “the cure to come by the destruction of the substance in which the corruption dwells? Or may it be reformed? In either case,” the inquiry must be urged, “what is the seat of the malady?” and “how is the amputation to be effected or the new blood poured in, and the man himself” still to “survive?” The world’s history,” the author adds, “is full of the most serious and terrible answers to these questions,—answers attesting how real and radical the difficulty was which suggested them.” (P. 38.)

What if one should answer,—first, that the corruption is in the whole “nature of man,”—in “his blood,” according to the full sense of that phrase in common life; secondly, that the cure is to be effected, neither by destruction of the substance nor by reformation of the conduct,—neither by amputation nor by the infusing of new blood,—but by a change equivalent to a new birth; and thirdly, that the seat of the malady being in the entire man, the recovery must consequently consist in the entire man being renewed;—the will subjected to the authority and law of God,—the conscience quickened to the fear of God,—the heart reconciled to the love of God?

Not thus is this author satisfied. He knows apparently of only two practical issues to which the view in



question leads. "The disease is in my body, this flesh, this accursed matter;"—"the flesh must be destroyed; till it is destroyed, I can never be better." "No, it is in the soul that you are corrupted and fallen. The soul must try to recover itself;" either by "thinking high thoughts of itself," as the enthusiast advises; or, as "the mystic" counsels, by "sinking—desiring annihilation for itself—dying, that it may know what life is." Thus the alternative is put, according to the doctrine that the infection of evil is in us all,—that we are members of a depraved race. The disease is in the body:—hence bodily exercise,—“the macerations and tortures of Indian devotees.” Or the disease is in the mind:—hence self-deification, or self-annihilation. (Pp. 38, 39.)

Such is really a fair summary of the author's statement on the subject of the theory which ascribes evil in man to native depravity. He is right on one point. If the theory cannot be better met,—if it must breed these monster superstitions,—they are superstitions which an age of unbelief may deride; but they have in them a vitality and susceptibility of resurrection apt to be not a little troublesome to the deniers of the supernatural. "These conclusions" must affect not only "a few individuals," but "the whole society in which they are found." There may be occasional reactions, "when a general unbelief may take the place of an all-embracing credulity." But "the old notions are not dead; they

cannot die." They are "about you," "within you." "If you can find no clue to them, no explanation of them, they will still darken your hearts and the face of the whole universe." Thus inevitable—thus ineradicable,—are these notions of a destruction of the flesh,—of an exaltation or death of the soul,—if the explanation of the origin of evil which refers it to a universal depravity of nature be admitted. (Pp. 39, 40.)

3. In this emergency, accordingly, the author invokes the supernatural. It is a *dignus vindice nodus*. And the *deus ex machinâ* is the belief in Evil Spirits.

That belief touches a theme far too solemn for even a passing smile. And the use which the author makes of it is fitted to awaken serious thought. Almost all that he says about it as a fact in history, is valuable. He speaks of it, with reference to the two former theories, as "an older, we may think quite an obsolete, method of accounting for the existence of evil;" while at the same time he says truly that unless it can be rightly explained, it is as apt as either of the others to "darken men's hearts and the face of the whole universe;" or rather, indeed, a great deal more so. On this account, any rational and scriptural statement of the doctrine of Satanic agency, such as the author professes to give, cannot but be acceptable.

He brings out well the universality of this belief in the heathen world, in which the powers of evil came to be deified, and treated as beings to be conciliated and

appeased. His account of the views and feelings which devout Jews cherished is upon the whole a fair one. And he seizes with good effect the chief triumph of Christianity in this particular;—its having set conspicuously in the view of all the great adversary and antagonist of God and of man, as entitled neither to worship nor to compromise, but on the contrary to be resisted with unrelenting force of will, and full assurance of victory. He concludes “that this belief is at least as potent as either of the others, often mixing with them and giving them a new character.” And he assigns a reason; “There is in men a sense of bondage to some power which they feel that they should resist and cannot. That feeling of the ‘ought,’ and the ‘cannot,’ is what forces, not upon scholars, but upon the poorest men, the question of the freedom of the will, and bids them seek some solution of it.” In proof or illustration of this, the author refers to the eagerness with which men listened “when Covenanters and Puritans were preaching” about such high and deep themes, and he earnestly exclaims: “Oh! let us give over our miserable notion that poor men only want teaching about things on the surface, or will ever be satisfied with such teaching! They are groping about the roots of things, whether we know it or not. You must meet them in their underground search, and shew them the way into daylight, if you want true and brave citizens, not a community of quacks and dupes.” True;

most true ; and no man is more entitled to speak and write thus than this author, as all who are acquainted with his labours in the direction here indicated must cheerfully and cordially allow. He does well to recognise in men those cravings with which Covenanters and Puritans sought to deal,—and which it was once a point of fashion with polite divines to overlook and ignore. Possibly he might recognise them to better purpose if he could bring himself to apply to them a little more of the authoritative decision with which Covenanters and Puritans were accustomed to speak in behalf of God,—to vindicate his righteousness and enforce his sentence of condemnation against man's guilt. But at all events it is a sound knowledge of human nature which prompts the slightly sarcastic rebuke with which he concludes his sketch of the “three schemes of the universe” he has been considering ;—“You may talk against devilry as you like ; you will not get rid of it, unless you can tell human beings whence comes that sense of a tyranny over their very selves, which they express in a thousand forms of speech, which excites them to the greatest, often the most profitless, indignation against the arrangements of this world, which tempts them to people it and heaven also, with objects of terror and despair.” (Pp. 41, 42.)

The “three schemes of the universe” come again under review, in the reverse order from that in which

they have been enumerated. "Each has given birth to theories of divinity, as well as to a very complicated anthropology." "They show no symptoms of reconciliation; yet they exist side by side." But in the light of "the statements which have embodied themselves in creeds, and are most open to the censures of modern refinement,"—not "according to any new conception,"—the author proposes to "ask what Christian theology says of them." (P. 42.)

1. "The acknowledgment of an Evil Spirit is *characteristic* of Christianity." Doubtless "the dread of such a spirit" existed before; always, indeed, and everywhere. But "in the gospels first the idea of a spirit directly and absolutely opposed to the Father of Lights, to the God of absolute goodness and love, bursts full upon us. There first we are taught, that it is not merely something in peculiarly evil men which is contending against the good and the true; no, nor something in all men; that God has an antagonist, and that all men, bad or good, have the same." "This antagonist presents himself to us, altogether as a spirit, with no visible shape or clothing whatsoever." "He is not a rival creator, or entitled to worship, but a mere destroyer"—"seeking continually to make us disbelieve in the Creator, to forsake the order that we are in." "This tempter speaks to me, to myself, to my will; over *that* he has established his tyranny: there his chains must be broken;" although "all things in nature, with the soul and the

body have partaken, and do partake, of the slavery to which the man himself has submitted." These "propositions" are left to "defend themselves by the light which they throw on the anticipations and difficulties of the human spirit, by the hint of deliverance which they offer it, by the horrible dreams which they scatter." (Pp. 43, 44, 45.)

2. Among these horrible dreams, the author specially notices "the horrible notion, which has haunted moralists, divines, and practical men, that pravity is the law of our being, and not the perpetual tendency to struggle against the law of our being." This notion the gospel "discards and anathematises." "As it confesses an evil spirit whose assaults are directed against the will in man, it forbids us ever to look upon any disease of our nature as the ultimate cause of transgression." (P. 45.)

Evidently he means to represent "looking upon some disease of our nature as the ultimate cause of transgression," and "the horrible notion that pravity is the law of our being," as identical. And just as evidently he means thus to characterise,—perhaps to stigmatise,—the current theological doctrine on the subject of human depravity.

It is difficult to see how "pravity" can be at once "a disease of our nature" and "the law of our being." It is equally difficult to understand what is meant by "the ultimate cause of transgression." Does the author hold that "the tyranny of the Evil Spirit over the will" is "the ultimate cause of transgression?"



May not the will itself be "the ultimate cause of transgression;" and may not "the assaults of an evil spirit against it," as well as "the disease or pravity of our nature," be conspiring or combining forces influencing the determination of the will?

Certainly if the sense of sin depicted in the previous Essay is a reality, the feeling of the sinner is,—I am "the ultimate cause of the transgression,"—I myself;—I alone, I willed it. No matter whether I willed it in subjection to an evil spirit, or in subjection to a "disease of my nature," or in subjection to both. I nevertheless,—I willed it. I caused it. And I willed it freely, of my own choice, under no compulsion or coercion of any sort. To explain my willing it, by telling me that my will is in bondage to an evil spirit, is to meet my case, as Eve sought to meet her own case, before a just and penitential sense of sin visited her; 'the serpent beguiled me and I did eat.' To explain my willing it, on the other hand, by telling me that my will is under bondage to a disease of my nature which is the ultimate cause of transgression,—may perhaps be equivalent to representing pravity as the law of my being. But to explain it, as Paul did, when he said, 'I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin in my members,'—is consistent with both of the facts upon which these other explanations might be supposed to proceed; and maintains entire, what neither



of the others does, my individuality,—my responsibility;—the standing of the I,—the *ego*,—in me, which above all things I must vindicate as my very manhood. Pravity is not this I,—any more than an evil spirit is this I. Pravity may influence me. The evil spirit may assail me. But neither the one nor the other is either the law of my being, or the ultimate cause of transgression. By pravity, or by an evil spirit, it may be said, I am what I am,—as Paul says the converse of this of himself as a converted and renewed man—‘by the grace of God I am what I am.’ But it is for what I am, from whatever cause, that I am responsible. It is I who am,—it is my will which is,—“the ultimate cause,” either of transgression, or of obedience;—according to the only meaning in which the expression “ultimate cause” can have any relevancy here;—the meaning, namely, that it is the really responsible cause, beyond which it is vain to look for any other explanation either of the sin, or of the sense of sin, with which, as a matter of fact, the gospel has to deal.

On the whole, it does not appear that either the question of the origin of evil, or the question of the freedom of the will, receives much light from the doctrine of the tyranny of an evil spirit, as that doctrine is placed in contrast to the doctrine of man’s entire depravity. Whatever difficulty there may be in explaining how my will, though subject to the depravity of my nature, still acts so freely as to make me the

proper cause of my own transgression,—there is precisely the same difficulty in explaining how my will, though subject to the tyranny of an Evil Spirit, does so. In both views alike there is the “ought,” and the “cannot,”—all the same.

But they need not be contrasted. They may be combined. And so they are, at least apparently, before the author leaves the subject. He too believes in “pravity.” And he thinks that “by setting forth the spirit of selfishness as *the* enemy of man, the gospel explains, in perfect coincidence with our experience, wherein this pravity consists ; that it is the inclination of every man to set up for himself, to become his own law and his own centre, and so to throw all society into discord and disorder. It thus explains the conviction of the devotee and the mystic that the body must die, and that the soul must die. Self being the plague of man, in some most wonderful sense *he* must die, that he may be delivered from his pravity. And yet neither body nor soul can be in itself evil. Each is in bondage to some evil power.” (Pp. 45, 46.)

The evil spirit is “the spirit of selfishness.” This means, it is to be presumed, that he is himself intensely selfish,—that he is the impersonation of selfishness,—that selfishness is the characteristic,—the moving principle,—of his active moral being. Thus selfish himself, he finds men selfish too ; self being the plague of man. This self in man must die. And the spirit of selfish-

ness tyrannising over man must be overcome. Are these two operations, or are they one? Perhaps the question is premature. But it is necessary to indicate here that it is a question which must be raised. Upon the answer to it which may be gathered from this and the subsequent Essays, will depend the solution of a grave doubt,—how far the author really holds the tyranny of the Evil Spirit and the pravity of man as distinct and independent doctrines,—nay how far, in any well-defined sense, he really holds either. Unless, indeed,—he holds them as distinct and independent, the one from the other, it may be questioned how far, to any practical purpose, he can recognise them at all.

That I am a fallen being,—that, under whatever temptation, I have aspired to be as God,—that my “inclination” is to be “my own law and my own centre,”—that “self is my plague,”—I deeply feel. That as a fallen being myself, I have come into a relation to other fallen beings,—to an evil spirit,—implying a large measure of subjection on my part and tyranny on his part, I am compelled to own. But the two things do not explain or account for one another. The one may exist without the other. If there be an evil spirit, the one has existed without the other. In the case of the evil spirit himself,—a fallen spirit of course, unless Manichæism is to be our refuge,—what is to be said? Has he the feeling of the “ought” and the “cannot?” If he has not, he cannot have intelligence, or conscience,

or will, analogous to ours ; in which case he cannot be our tempter, or our tyrant. If he has, whence and how did he get it ?

This is not an unfair question when it is the origin of evil that is under discussion. It cannot be evaded otherwise than by having recourse to something like the Indian method of supporting the earth upon an elephant, the elephant upon a tortoise, and so on indefinitely. It is directly in point to ask the question. And the point of it is this. The tyranny of an evil spirit over me is brought in to shew me why I feel myself bound and enslaved,—to solve the mystery of my being,—the “I ought” and the “I cannot.” If I am myself innocent and holy,—if I am pure from pravity and loyal to the Supreme,—it is difficult to see how any assaults of the evil spirit should enslave me, or make me feel—I “ought” but I “cannot.” Certainly not unless my will surrenders,—unless I willingly consent. And if I do thus willingly consent, and my will surrenders,—to what do I consent—to what does my will surrender ? Not to the evil spirit, but to the seeming good and the seeming true which he presents to me as his temptation. The instant I give in, I find myself in the position in which the evil spirit is ; not, however, because he has been my tyrant ; but because at his instance, when he was not my tyrant, I did as he had done. He and I might never afterwards meet. He might never use another art, or wield another weapon, against me.

Would I at all the less in that case have the feeling of bondage—the “I ought” but “I cannot?” We do meet, however. And I find that he has an ascendancy over me. I am told also that his ascendancy over me is the true explanation of my bondage and my feeling of it. Can I fail to ask what is the explanation of his? For I am as certain of his bondage and his feeling of it, as I am of my own. Otherwise he is again to me the rival of my Creator; and as such, he is to be appeased, or to be worshipped.

The truth is, the confusion of ideas as to the question of the origin of evil which is so noticeable at the beginning of this Essay, pervades it to the end. In accounting for the origin of evil in the race of man, the agency of an evil spirit may be introduced. He is the tempter. But he is the tempter of innocence. Before the temptation, and the surrender of the will to temptation, there is neither tyranny on the tempter's part, nor subjection on the part of man. In seeking to ascertain the source and the strength of evil in the individual man,—in myself for instance,—I may know that the evil spirit is not now my tempter merely, but my tyrant. And I may deeply feel and resent my subjugation to him. I cannot, however, accept anything I know, or anything I feel, of my relation to the evil spirit as a solution of the mystery of my bondage. For I instinctively know and feel that the bondage is common to me,—and the sense of it is common to me,—with the evil spirit him-

self,—who had no tempter and has no tyrant,—but having been my tempter, has become my tyrant.

Thus the doctrine of the tyranny of the evil spirit, if it is to explain the phenomenon or fact to be accounted for, really implies the doctrine of human depravity; and on the other hand, the doctrine of human depravity sets aside and makes irrelevant the explanation founded on the doctrine of the tyranny of the evil spirit.

But in fact, the sense of sin in man is not to be resolved either into an impression of subjection to a foreign force, or into a consciousness of inherent pravity. The sense of sin may bring me into contact with both; but it is caused by neither. It is a primary, original, independent conviction in the mind of a wrong-doer, or a wrong-thinker, possessed of reason, conscience, and will. And it has respect, not to an evil spirit, not to pravity of nature, but to the Holy One, and the relation of that wrong-doer or wrong-thinker to the Holy One. The thought which haunts me is not that an evil spirit rules me, nor that inherent pravity makes me what I am, but that I sin against the Holy One. And my first glimpse of hope must spring from the assurance, not that he can conquer the evil spirit who rules me,—not even that he can renovate the pravity of my nature,—though I must believe that he can do both,—but that he, the Holy One, can righteously rid me of that consciousness of guilt,—that criminality or blameworthiness,—that feeling of ill-desert,—which is the real ulti-



mate cause of the bondage in which I am, and the sense or feeling of bondage which is in me. A capital defect in this Essay is the omission which, for the present, it is enough thus to indicate.

In the meantime, let the element of correspondence or adaptation between man and his tyrant be observed. The plague of man is self; the evil spirit is the spirit of selfishness. The suggestion of the evil spirit to me is to set up for myself, to consult for myself, to act for myself; and I am but too ready to comply with the suggestion. This is my plague, from which by dying "in some most wonderful sense" I am delivered. It is not dying in the sense of "the devotee and the mystic" who are convinced "that the body must die, and that the soul must die." "Neither body nor soul can be in itself evil. Each is in bondage to some evil power. If there be a God of order mightier than the Destroyer, body and soul must be capable of redemption and restoration." (P. 46.)

3. "And thus this theology comes in contact with that wide-spread and most plausible creed which attributes all evil to circumstances." It admits all "the facts from which this creed is deduced." It "justifies in principle the prudential alleviations of the evil to which we all do and must resort." Let "injurious influences be taken away from a man," because he is apt "to think that they are his rightful masters, and to act as if they were;" and also because he ought to know



“ what has robbed him of his freedom, whose yoke needs to be broken if he is not always to be a slave.” He will discover that “ the tyranny which is over him is a tyranny over his whole race.” “ We shall never give him any clearness of mind, or any hope, unless we can tell him that the spirit of selfishness is the common enemy, and that he has been overcome.” (Pp. 46, 47.)

It is not necessary to inquire particularly what bearing these remarks have on the real question at issue. It may be more useful to follow the author in what may be regarded as the practical application of his views respecting the evil spirit, and the connexion of his agency with human depravity.

The “ deeply-rooted aversion ” with which Unitarians regard “ the doctrine of the existence and personality of the Devil,” is so thoroughly understood by the author, that he almost “ shrinks from saying, I maintain this dogma.” But he will satisfy them that he must maintain it, and even reconcile them to his maintaining it, for he finds in it a defence against “ some of the hardest, most mischievous theories of our modern popular divinity,—those which shock the moral sense and reason of men most, those which most undermine the belief in God’s infinite charity.” (Pp. 47, 48.)

The first of these pestilent heresies is the representation usually given of our fallen state. “ *We* talk of the depravity of our nature, of the evil we have inherited from Adam,” instead of saying “ as the men in the old

time would have said bravely, meaning what they said, 'We are engaged in a warfare with an evil spirit; *he* is trying to separate us from God, to make us hate our brethren.'" (P. 48.) This, according to the ordinary view, the evil spirit tried at first, when man was yet innocent. And he succeeded. Of course he is trying still to keep us in the state into which he brought us. But the question is, Are men separated from God, and selfish haters of their brethren? Is that their condition and character by nature? If so, then until there is a thorough radical change of both,—of their condition and of their character,—it is idle to talk of a brave battle with an evil spirit. The point at issue lies precisely here. The author says that an evil spirit is trying to separate us from God and make us hate our brethren. Are we not separated from God—is not self the plague of man—naturally? "That every child of Adam has this infection of nature, I must entirely and inwardly believe;"—so the author writes, with immediate reference to that very "depravity of our nature," that "evil we have inherited from Adam" of which he says "*we* talk," when the men of old would have talked of doing battle against the evil spirit. What is "this infection of nature" which the author believes that every child of Adam has? Is it ungodliness, uncharitableness, selfishness? Is it that we are naturally what the evil spirit is trying to make us? If not, what is it?

Nor will it avail to represent the holders of the com-

mon doctrine as saying that "this infection of nature forces us to commit sin," and to stigmatise their saying so as "a *very* close approximation" to "what the Jews of old said,—what the prophets denounced as the most flagrant denial of God,—*We are delivered to do all these abominations*;"—an approximation to "this detestable heresy" so close as to have "called forth an indignant and a righteous protest from many classes of their countrymen, the Unitarians being in some sort the spokesmen for the rest." (P. 48.) The author strangely enough confounds the Antinomian boast of impunity,—we are at liberty to commit sin,—with the sort of fatalism which he means to impute to "some of our popular statements,"—we are forced to commit sin. But, indeed, what is it that he really means? When a free agent acts according to his nature, does he act upon compulsion? He whose nature is perfect love cannot but do works of love. Would it be right to say that the perfection of his nature forces him to do them? He whose plague is self, may have that plague as an infection of nature so thoroughly that he cannot but do works of selfishness, which are works of sin. Is this fairly equivalent to saying that the infection of his nature forces him to commit sin? What of the evil spirit? His nature is infected; deeply infected; on the author's own showing, pure malignity is the essence of it. And yet it must be presumed that he acts freely,—not under force or compulsion,—when the malignity of his nature moves him to

tempt and tyrannise over man. Nay further, is there more of force and compulsion when a man acts in accordance with his nature,—be that nature holy or infected,—than when he acts in compliance with the power or influence of a tyrant? But in fact, does the author admit infection of nature in any real sense,—to any extent at all? Does he allow that a man is in any degree, even partially, influenced in his acting by that infection of nature? Be that influence ever so slight, it is, as he represents the matter, force and compulsion so far as it goes; it must be so, if it is force and compulsion when the infection of nature is such as to influence him altogether. It is a mere evasion of the difficulty in which he himself is, to taunt those who “maintain the ‘absolute, universal, all-pervading depravity’ of human nature” with resorting to “the feeble and pusillanimous course of introducing modifications into the broad phrases with which” they start, and using “pretty metaphors” about “‘beautiful relics of the divine image,’ ‘fallen columns,’ &c.” (Pp. 48, 49.) The taunt may pass for argument with some; and perhaps metaphors had better be avoided on “a subject of such solemn and personal interest.” The advocates of the obnoxious doctrine in question are quite prepared to say, without a metaphor,—and indeed are in the habit of saying,—that there is good to be found among fallen men,—good qualities, good affections, good deeds,—which may be ascribed partly to their essential humanity, and partly also to the

dispensation of divine forbearance under which they are. What they allege respecting depravity is quite consistent with their saying that. They hold, however, not vaguely and with modifications "reducing their assertions into mere nonentities," but distinctly and without qualification, that in so far as our relation to God and the state of our heart towards God are concerned, our depravity,—the derangement or infection of our nature,—is thorough and entire. And they hold, moreover, that until there is a thorough and entire change in our relation to God and in the state of our heart toward God, we can neither be delivered from the plague of self which makes even the most amiable and kindly of us unsocial and unlovely, nor emancipated from the tyranny of the evil spirit, and put in a position to wage a brave warfare with him. These are explicit enough statements. Are the author's own statements equally so? Will he tell us plainly, and without "equivocations," what kind or amount of infection of nature he admits, as being safe from the very appearance of approximation to the "detestable heresy,"—that "this infection forces us to commit sin?" In particular, to come back to the real point at issue, will he say whether the evil spirit, when he "tries to separate us from God, to make us hate our brethren," finds us already, by infection of nature, ungodly and selfish, or merely capable of becoming ungodly and selfish at his instance and under his influence and power? Are we all naturally, what Adam

is usually understood to have been before the Fall, apt to yield to the evil spirit trying to separate us from God? Are we so apt to yield as to make it morally certain that all of us, more or less, will yield—to make it matter of fact that with scarcely an exception, if with any, we do yield? Is that our “infection of nature?” Or is it something more than that? If so, will the author have the goodness to shew what it is,—as distinct from the hereditary and entire depravity asserted in the ordinary doctrine,—and how it is less open to those objections against that doctrine which he regards as so formidable and so fatal?

The real question is,—Are we, or are we not, by nature, what the author says that an evil spirit is trying to make us? That question must be met, and not evaded. Is it met by the final explanation which the author gives? He asks “What is pravity or depravity,—affix to it the epithets universal, absolute, or any you please,—but an inclination to something that is not right,—an inclination to turn away from what is right, that which is the true and proper state of him who has the inclination? What is it that experiences the inclination; what is it that provokes the inclination? I believe it is the spirit within me which feels the inclination; I believe it is a spirit speaking to my spirit who stirs up the inclination. That old way of stating the case explains the facts, and commends itself to my reason.” (P. 49.)



It is an old way of stating the case. It is, after all, very much like the way in which the old Unitarians stated the case, with scarcely any material or practically important difference. The author's doctrine that it is a spirit speaking to my spirit who stirs up the inclination, is really equivalent to little more than that the inclination is stirred up by the suggestion of motives and the application of influences to my spirit. Probably not a few Unitarians, of the old school as well as of the new, might not be very unwilling to admit an unseen agency of some kind at work, suggesting these motives and applying these influences. They might acknowledge an evil spirit, and believe that he is dealing thus, in a very powerful manner, with men. But after all, they might say, is not our direct and immediate business with those motives and influences of which we are conscious? If we fight manfully with these, we fight with the evil spirit. How otherwise can we meet him? What is gained by bringing the invisible enemy himself so much forward, instead of setting us to grapple with the palpable means and instruments he uses?—Much, the author would reply. "The whole battle of life becomes infinitely more serious to me, and yet more hopeful; because I cannot believe in a spirit who is tempting me into falsehood and evil, without believing that God is a spirit, and that I am bound to him, and that he is attracting me to truth and goodness." (P. 49.) It might have been well for our mother Eve, if Satan



had not disguised himself as an angel of light, if he had been revealed to her in his own malignant nature. The recognition of an evil spirit tempting her into falsehood and evil, might have set her to think of the Spirit of all good to whom, as her gracious Maker, she was bound, who was attracting her to truth and goodness. Place me again where Eve was; make me again what Eve was; let me be upon a right footing with my God; let my heart be right with God. Then let me see the enemy face to face, a living, powerful, tyrant spirit; and forewarned, forearmed, I fight against him valiantly. But my conscience tells me that I am a criminal and rebel. My heart upbraids me with disaffection and disloyalty. Shew me how these elements of weakness are to be got rid of; and then again I rouse myself to the combat. Till then I incline rather to compromise and special pleading; I am fain to shelter myself under the old apology of circumstances and influences; I can but hang my head and feebly complain,—‘The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.’

Here the examination of this Essay may close with a mere notice of another of “those hardest, most mischievous theories of our modern popular divinity,” against which the author finds a defence in the doctrine he has been teaching about the evil spirit. This second pestilent heresy is “the unsightly, and to him quite portentous, imagination of modern divines,” who, it seems, hold that there “has been a war in the divine

mind between justice and mercy; and that a great scheme was necessary to bring these qualities into reconciliation." He thinks that the belief that "an evil spirit is drawing men away both from mercy and righteousness, is a practical witness against any notion of this kind." Men holding strongly that belief must feel "that to be in a healthful moral state, they must be both just and merciful; that there must be a perfect unity and harmony between these qualities; that whatever puts them in seeming division comes from the Evil Spirit; that it is treason to ascribe to the archetypal mind that which destroys the purity of the image. The God who is to deliver men from this strife, cannot himself be the subject of it." (P. 50.)

Does the author really not know that when theologians speak of a war between justice and mercy, they refer not to a strife in the divine mind, but to a crisis or exigency in the divine government? If he does not know this, or if he cannot see the difference between these two things, he is an incompetent theologian. Of the other alternative it is unnecessary to speak. True, there must be no strife—there can be no strife—in the mind of the God who is to deliver us from the strife which the evil spirit causes. But what is that strife? Is it not the divorce of justice and mercy? Mercy will prevail against justice; 'ye shall not surely die.' The author's plan, apparently, is to disown both attributes. In his system there is no room either for justice or for mercy;

for there is no sentence of condemnation, and no remission of it. All is resolved into love, and a law of love working itself out somehow, as any other law of nature must do. The divine plan, on the other hand, refuses either to disown or to dis sever the perfections of justice and mercy in God. It exhibits their harmony in Christ,—in Christ as meeting the claims of justice; causing mercy and truth to meet together, righteousness and peace to embrace each other. In that way it destroys the strife which the devil would fain perpetuate.

The concluding appeal to the younger men among the Unitarians is full of power. "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress,"—"the fight with Apollyon,"—are owned by them as real. Apart from the "old Hebrew drapery" there are "abysses and eternities with which men have to do,—valleys of the shadow of death, if you like that language." By all means, replies the author, let "the outside" be given up; "to the inside I hold fast." But "these eternities and abysses of yours look to me very like outsides, mere drapery." Strip it off, and what remains? "The history of some mental process no doubt;—but the nature of the process? Is it a shadow-fight? Is it a game of blacks and whites, the same hand moving both?" No, says the author. You will be simple, healthy, victorious, true,—it is "the result of my own experience,"—"when you have courage to say, 'We do verily believe that we have a world, and a flesh, and a DEVIL, to fight with.'" Certainly the

battle of life is not a game of blacks and whites, moved by the same hand. I am not a lonely amateur, getting up a fight upon a chess-board to interest or amuse my solitude. I am engaged in a real strife with a real enemy, to whom my sin,—my guilt,—my depravity,—gives an immense advantage over me. If I am to cope with him successfully, I must first of all come to an understanding with another being,—the Being to whom I really belong and am legitimately bound. The adjustment of his claims as a Ruler upon me as his subject,—and of my peace with him,—must be as real and personal as my warfare with the evil spirit; and must precede any hopeful prosecution of that warfare.

The author himself seems to admit, that there must be some divine panoply. Addressing a parting word in this Essay to the younger Unitarians, he promises to shew them,—before they believe, or know that they believe, what he has been telling them of the evil spirit,—“that in their heart, as much as in his own, there is a witness for righteousness and truth, which world, and flesh, and devil, have been unable to silence.” (P. 53.) This, accordingly, he proceeds to do in the next Essay. Let it be observed, however, in leaving the present Essay, that not a hint is given of any personal transaction between a man and his Maker,—such as judicial reckoning and renovation of nature. There is no need of any such transaction to be the preliminary to an effectual struggle with the evil spirit,—there is no room for it in the

author's theology. What he undertakes to shew is that, quite apart from all procedure of that sort, every man has in himself, as the root of his being, a living Redeemer, whom if he will but own, he is more than a match for world, flesh, and devil, all combined.

#### ESSAY IV.—ON THE SENSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN MEN, AND THEIR DISCOVERY OF A REDEEMER.

The experience of Job is the beginning and end of this Essay.

It is not necessary to inquire how far the author's view of the Book,—or his view of the character of Job and the dealings of God with him,—may or may not be recognised as Scriptural and sound. He makes Job the representative of manhood generally, and of every individual man in particular. He finds nothing in the experience of Job which is not common to the whole race. And he finds also, in every member of the race, the elements of the experience of Job.

These elements are two in number. The one is a sense of righteousness;—the other is resentment of pain. The sense of righteousness is a protest against the charge of sin: the resentment of pain is a protest against the call to submission. Having the sense of righteousness, I cannot admit the charge of sin without an explanation on my part: having the resentment of pain, I cannot yield to suffering without an explanation

on the part of God. If I must confess that I sin, I must be allowed, in doing so, to vindicate my righteousness: if I must consent to suffer, I must be permitted to ask the reason why, and with whatever docility I can command, to require an answer.

These are the primary elements of genuine human experience. They pass, as the Essay advances, into principles of the divine government. Or rather, they are found to meet in a divine Person. The righteousness of which every man has a sense, is identical with the Redeemer. The acknowledgment of his right to be set free from evil, is identical with the redemption. Thus 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'

The sense of righteousness is associated with the sense of sin. The resentment of pain has associated with it the sense or feeling of a claim to deliverance from pain. In this double antithesis, the idea, or belief, of a Redeemer and a redemption takes its rise.

The sense of righteousness and the sense of sin, are intimately bound up in one another. They are so in the case of Job, as the author puts it in the very beginning of the Essay:—"The suffering man has the most intense personal sense of his own evil. He makes also the most vehement, repeated, passionate, protestations of his own righteousness." (P. 54.) His friends may ask—"why does he indulge in such dreadful wailings, which must be offensive to the Judge who has afflicted him? Above all, how dares he talk, as if a man might



be just before God? How could he, who complained that he possessed the sins of his youth, nevertheless declare, that there was a purity and a truth in him, which the Searcher of all hearts would at last acknowledge (P. 55.) As the trial goes on, the two feelings grow in intensity, apparently strengthening one another. Job's "consciousness that he has a righteousness, a real substantial righteousness, which no one shall remove from him, which he will hold fast and not let go, waxes stronger as his pain becomes bitterer and more habitual. There are great alternations of feeling. The deepest acknowledgments of sin come forth from his heart. But he speaks as if his righteousness were deeper and more grounded than that. Sin cleaves very close to him; it seems as if it were part of himself, almost as if it were himself. But his righteousness belongs to him still more entirely. However strange the paradox, it is more *himself* than even that is." (Pp. 56, 57.)

Whether this is a true representation of Job's feelings or not,—is not now the question. It represents truly the author's view of what is the common experience of man. (P. 59.)

Accordingly he tells us that "clergymen and religious persons" who "have conversed at all seriously with men of any class,"—"hear from one and all, in some language or other, the assertion of a righteousness which they are sure is theirs, and which cannot be taken from them." Amid all their confession and feeling of sin,



and all their fear of judgment, "there is a secret reserve of belief that there is in them that which is not sin, which is the very opposite of sin." If you tell them that this is wrong, "that 'God be merciful to me' is the only true prayer, that God's law is very holy, that they have violated it, and so forth,—they will listen—they may assent"—they may be silent. But not "the best and honestest." "The man who cries, *Till I die you shall not take my integrity from me*,—may be nearest, if the Bible speaks right, to the root of the matter, nearest to repentance and humiliation." At all events, "each man has got this sense of a righteousness, whether he realizes it distinctly or indistinctly, whether he expresses it courageously, or keeps it to himself." (Pp. 60, 61.)

Such is the author's account of the first element in human experience, as identified with the experience of Job. Omitting the somewhat supercilious, and not very respectful allusion to the holy law of God, the violation of it, "and so forth,"—it is impossible not to notice the extreme vagueness of this description. Nor is the fault amended by what he says of "that other conviction which Job uttered so manfully, that pain is an evil and comes from an enemy, and is contrary to the nature and reason of things." Some questions might here be asked. Is the enemy from whom pain comes the evil spirit? If so, how is this to be reconciled with the infliction of punishment on the part of God? If not, if pain is a salutary discipline,—which is the author's only

idea of punishment,—how is the conviction that it comes from an enemy to be justified or explained? An enemy may be the instrument,—the subordinate agent; working, as in Job's case, by express permission from God, and under restrictions previously fixed by God. But Job does not recognise him in that capacity. On the contrary, the very object of Satan is to make Job feel that the pain comes from an enemy,—that God is the enemy,—and that the sufferer had better seek relief in an alliance or compromise with himself. Job resisted this feeling. He never owned Satan as the party from whom his pain came. He traced it all to God. And whatever darkness might envelope the whole procedure, he never thought of regarding the God from whom his pain came, as on that account an enemy. His victory in the trial was that he refused to do so. Such questions and remarks, however, may be classed by the author among the "cool, disinterested reflections," for which "the witness of the conscience,—of the whole man,—on this point, is too strong." "It is no time for school distinctions between soul and body." "It is not a Redeemer for his soul that man asks, more than for his body,"—but a deliverer from "the condition in which he is." "To be as he is, is not, he thinks, according to nature and order. He asks God, if he asks at all, to shew that it is not according to his will." (Pp. 61, 62.) It is apparently a bold demand. It compels at all events an examination of what the author says in the

way of explaining, defining and identifying, the fact or phenomenon in human experience,—the instinct of man's moral nature,—on which he bases the demand; and to which he attaches so much importance as to make it the germ of man's idea of a Redeemer,—if not even the ground of his belief in a Redeemer.

It is important, then, to know what is real in the instinct or experience to which the author appeals;—what is really natural. The sense of sin and the resentment of pain are the fundamental elements of this inquiry. They are the *data*,—the assumed or conceded facts.

Now it is true that the sense of sin involves as its counterpart or correlative, a sense of righteousness; and the accompanying resentment of pain involves a sense of some claim to deliverance—or at least of some deliverance that may be claimed. Let the sense of sin and the resentment of pain be genuine. Let them have respect to God, and my relation to God. I sin against God; God inflicts pain upon me. If I do unreservedly own these two facts, it must be because I am enabled to see a righteousness and a redemption,—or a righteous redemption,—adequate to meet both of them; either apart, or both together.

No human—no rational being, can really feel sin apart from righteousness,—or pain apart from redemption. The evil spirit,—Manichæism being out of the question,—sins and suffers; he commits sin and suffers pain. He justifies the sin. He resents the pain. He

justifies the sin ; not perhaps as sin, but as forced upon him by the exigency of his case, and warranted in all the circumstances ;—inevitable, in short ;—a just protest against undue severity. He resents the pain, rebelling against it as an infliction of tyranny, to be repudiated when it cannot be resisted. Let him be brought to acknowledge the sin, and accept the pain, as Job did. And like Job, he will be saved.

But has the evil spirit the elements of this salvation in himself ? Or could he have them apart from a divine message, proposing to him reconciliation, and prescribing its terms ?

The question is in point. And the point of it does not lie in any contrast between our position and temperament, and those of the evil spirit ; for it may be contended that fallen men and fallen angels are not on the same footing,—and it is admitted that they are not. But the point of the question, in its bearing upon the author's theory, is this :—If the sense of sin and the resentment of pain are different in fallen men from what the corresponding feelings are in the fallen angels, to what is the difference to be ascribed ? If the answer be, that it is to be ascribed to a dispensation of forbearance and a revelation of mercy,—then plainly, those who are the subjects of that dispensation, and to whom that revelation is made, come to a sense of sin and resentment of pain, to whatever extent they may come to either or both, in very peculiar circumstances ;—in circumstances,

indeed, so peculiar as to preclude their subjective personal experience from being any indication of the divine method of procedure ; since that experience is itself the result of the divine method of procedure, indicated in the dispensation of forbearance, and unfolded in the revelation of mercy.

It would seem, indeed, as if the author reasoned in a circle. He takes the sense of sin and resentment of pain as these rise in the bosom of a criminal respited and within sight of a reprieve ; which is man's real position. And he sets up that sense of sin and that resentment of pain in the criminal so situated, as the measure, the proof and evidence, of the very respite and reprieve, — the present respite and prospective reprieve, — which call these feelings forth.

I sin and I suffer. All above and around me there is no voice or sign of mercy ; but only an awful silence. I am summoned to stand, to use the solemn language of Isaac Taylor, 'denuded of all but conscience, before the open presence of the Holy One.' Still there is no voice or sign beyond the solitary question—Hast thou done the evil ? What room can there be for any other feeling in my bosom but sulky shame, or sneaking fear, or insolent defiance, or all the three ? But let a look of compassion be seen on the countenance of the Holy One, and let words of hope come from his lips,—let him tell me of his purpose to provide a remedy for the evil I have done,—let him discover to me the love which he still

bears to me, and give me a hint of some wise and holy plan by means of which that love is to meet my case,—then, if I understand him, and in so far as I understand and believe him, there rises within me a new-born honesty. My sin is before me. It is before me in the sight of the Holy One. But his communication to me restores my manhood. Confession comes; but it is no longer craven; it has in it a consciousness of integrity,—a feeling of returning self-respect—wide as the poles asunder from self-justification—essentially, however, and truly, a sense of righteousness. Meanwhile suffering continues or increases. I suffer,—I suffer more and more. And I cry out, not only from the instinct of pain, but with a deeper grief,—the grief of an unsolved mystery. Why all this anguish, seeming to keep pace with the uprightness of which I am now conscious in the matter of my sin and the confession of it,—warring against that uprightness,—and threatening to throw me back, as unwise friends would throw me, upon the mere effort to propitiate my tormentor,—the infliker of my pain,—by abject submission? Let the struggle go on and get worse. Let my sin be more and more felt and owned. The more it is felt and owned, the more I am conscious of my integrity. I am certain that, let sin be ever so much in me, as part of me, as my very self,—yet because I see it to be sin, and feel it to be sin, and confess it to be sin,—there is that in me which is not sin, but is against sin. And still I suffer more and



more. And it is more and more hard to understand how all this comes to be so. The temptation to defiance, or to servility, grows very strong. It is time for the Holy One again to speak to me. Calmly he directs my view to the wisdom with which he guides and governs all things above and around me,—a wisdom which I cannot search, but which with reference to all these things I firmly trust. He asks me if I cannot trust that wisdom, though I cannot search it, in my own case also. And I am silenced and ashamed.

Or, still more to reassure me and enable me to hold fast my integrity, he discovers to me more unreservedly the plan of my recovery ; and in the mission of his Son, causes me to perceive his own fatherly love. Then, in the choice language of this Essay, “a feeling of infinite shame grows out of the feeling of undoubting trust. The child sinks in nothingness at its Father’s feet, just when he is about to take it to his arms.” (P. 63.)

Let the author be cordially thanked for these few words of rarest beauty as well as of deepest truth. There can be no controversy here ; the cry, ‘who shall deliver me?’ is met. ‘Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.’ Alas ! that with so much apparent and even real agreement as to the result, there should be any question as to the process ! But if the result is to be genuine and trustworthy, the process must be sound and Scriptural. It is necessary, therefore, to prosecute the inquiry,—How



does the author arrive at the blessed consummation he so well describes? The suffering man, crying to heaven, believes that he must have a deliverer somewhere. The condition in which he finds himself,—not a part of himself merely, his soul as distinct from his body,—(the author is right in that, though who they are whom he means to hit is not very apparent,)—but his entire self,—is one from which he has a sort of right to be set free. It is not “according to nature and order; he asks God to show that it is not according to his will.” God “answers his creature and child out of the whirlwind; and by wonderful arguments, drawn, it may be, from the least object in nature, from the commonest part of man’s experience, or from the whole Cosmos in which he finds himself, addressed to an ear which our words do not reach, entering secret passages of the spirit to which we have no access, leads him,—the instincts and anticipations of his heart being not denied but justified,—to lay himself in dust and ashes. When a man knows that he has a righteous Lord and Judge, who does not plead his omnipotence and his right to punish, but who debates the case with him, who shows him his truth and his error, the sense of infinite wisdom, sustaining and carrying out infinite love, abases him rapidly. He perceives that he has been measuring himself, and his understanding, against that love, that wisdom.” Trusting and ashamed, “the child sinks in nothingness at its Father’s feet, just when he is about to take it to his arms.”

Now it may be admitted most fully that if God, in answering "the instincts and anticipations" of my heart, were to deny, instead of justifying them,—and in particular, if he were merely to "plead his omnipotence and his right to punish,"—no such gracious effect as this could be produced in me. If, however, I believe and cannot help believing, not merely that God has a right to punish, but that being a righteous Ruler, he must punish, and punish judicially;—if my conscience testifies that as a guilty and corrupt criminal I am condemned;—if I deeply feel that no redeemer will meet my urgent need who is not able to rid me of my guilt and my corruption, and that too with the concurrence of my offended Lord;—if these are among the instincts and aspirations of my heart;—then, no "debating of my case" that does not imply some light on these points will either humble me, or reconcile me. Information, to some extent at least, on the subject of God's manner of dealing with guilt and corruption in man, was actually given after the Fall, by express revelation and by the institution of sacrifice. All men, in all ages and countries, have had the benefit of that information; the earlier races having the most of it,—excepting, of course, the line of Scripture. Job had it; and most expositors think that he refers to it when he says, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth.' At all events he had it. And whatever may have been the full import of what God said to him out of the whirlwind, as bearing upon his immediate expe-

rience,—his knowledge of the divine plan and purpose of redemption, as revealed after the Fall, must have entered into that impulse of generous and honest self-abasement which moved him to exclaim,—‘I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.’

All this is quite consistent with the child falling at the feet, being taken into the arms, of its Father. Nay, it explains the reconciliation on both sides. As a Father, God has undertaken, in infinite mercy, to provide for the removal of fallen man’s guilt and corruption. Believing this, feeling this, I am satisfied at last,—after his calm remonstrance with me for not implicitly trusting his wisdom and his love. I am more than satisfied, I am subdued. The criminal is melted into a child; the child is clasped in the embrace of a Father.

“It is a *Father*, not a vague *world*, before which he has bowed.” So the author follows up immediately his touching representation. And he implores us, “if we would preserve our brethren from a dark abyss of pantheism, when their spirits are beginning to open to some of the harmonies of the universe, not to pause till we understand how it should be the end of God’s discipline to justify Job more than his three friends; how it can be possible for him to sanction that conviction of an actual righteousness, belonging to the man himself, which we were so anxious to confute.” “For this pur-

pose," he says, "we must lay the foundations of our faith very much deeper than they are laid in modern expositions." (P. 63.) Then he seizes on the expression "bringing the sinner to Christ," as the sum and substance of these "modern expositions." And representing that as equivalent to bringing him "to know what Christ did and spoke, in those thirty-three years between his birth and his resurrection," he adds, "we shall never understand the infinite significance of those years, or be able to take the gospel narratives of them simply as they stand, if we have no other thought than this, or if there is no other which we dare proclaim to our fellow-men." (Pp. 63, 64.) It seems that our "belief that Christ was, before he took human flesh and dwelt among us,"—"that he actually conversed with prophets and patriarchs, and made them aware of his presence,"—has become unreal; "an arid dogma, which we prove out of Pearson, and which has nothing to do with our inmost convictions, with our very life." And the reason is,— "because we do not accept the New Testament explanation of these appearances and manifestations; because we do not believe that Christ is in every man, the source of all light that ever visits him, the root of all the righteous thoughts and acts that he is ever able to conceive or do." (P. 64.)

Now, in the first place, if we would preserve thoughtful men from pantheism, we must distinguish the righteousness,—the uprightness,—the 'truth in the inward parts,'

—which Job had and which God owned in him,—from the Redeemer whom Job knew to be living, and to be his. To confound, or to identify, these,—is to cut away the foundation of any real personal transaction between me and my Maker ;—any actual reckoning on his part with me ;—any righteous adjustment of my position as under law to him. And if that foundation be destroyed, I think I see only a very frail barrier, if any, between me and pantheism. Again, secondly, “we” do not in our preaching merely wish to bring sinners to Christ ; we try to bring Christ near to them ; or rather to shew them that in the gospel which we preach Christ is brought near to them ; very near ; so near that as he stands at the door and knocks, they have but to open, and he will come in to them and sup with them. In the third place, we do not forget that Christ as the living Redeemer,—the Word,—the Life,—the Light of men,—has been always and is now everywhere in the world,—lighting more or less every man that cometh into the world,—shining in darkness though the darkness comprehendeth it not. But, in the fourth place,—while we account for whatever is good in human character and human society by the fact that he who is the light of men has always been among men,—we do not believe that Christ is in every man. We say that such a belief does not meet the sinner’s case. Christ for him, not Christ in him, is what he first needs,—what he first will welcome.

This is the point at issue. This is the real question

raised by the painful but gracious experience of Job and its happy issue. It is this; How may a certain state of mind with reference both to sin and to suffering, be explained? Is it the result of "the instincts and anticipations of" every man's "heart not being denied, but justified?" Is it "Christ in every man?" Or is it Christ, from the beginning, discovering more or less clearly to every man, by a revelation from without and from above, the Father's purpose and plan of salvation,—and making that discovery more and more clear to all whose minds are opened to receive it? Is it "Christ in every man?" Or is it Christ to every man?

That there is, and has always been, 'a light, lighting every man that cometh into the world,'—and that Christ is that light,—must be admitted, if it be true that God revealed at first his plan of mercy, and has never since left himself without a witness. That light all men have had, and have, in their experience of the forbearance of God, and in the indications of his gracious designs on their behalf. It increases in clearness as the revelation in the word becomes more plain. But more or less it lighteth all. And it is under that light, that the feelings which have been described as to sin and suffering are called forth.

The author does not formally deny this external light; but he omits it; he leaves it out of view, and makes no use of it as an element in his account of the experience in question. All the light he needs is "Christ in every



man." This indeed is all, or nearly all, that there is room for in his theology.

And here, let it be observed, it is not necessary even to discuss the question;—Is Christ in every man? Admitting that to be true, another question must arise,—Is it possible to explain in that way alone the state of mind which is ascribed to Job? It is not said that Christ is in every man, as giving him information on the subject of God's manner of dealing with sinners; but that Christ is in every man, as calling forth, or originating, a certain common experience. And the difficulty is this,—that after all, the experience is of such a sort as nothing but some knowledge or notion of God's manner of dealing with sinners can rationally explain. By no conceivable internal movement or operation or principle,—by no inward light,—no Christ in me,—can I reach and realise that frankness to confess sin, and faith to submit to suffering, which constitute my integrity, unless I have before me,—presented to me and not evolved out of me,—some idea, whether vague and doubtful or distinct and certain, of what the mind and purpose of the Holy One towards such as I am, really and actually, and as a matter of fact, are.

The author considers that his view,—finding in every man a state of mind with reference to sin and suffering, "whether he realises it distinctly or indistinctly," which is equivalent to the Redeemer, and is in fact the Redeemer,—has an important bearing on "the



Straussian doctrine," and on the "Unitarian controversy." (P. 64.)

He has no fear of our falling, in these days, "into the doctrine about Christ which prevailed in the last century,"—"into a belief of him as a man, and nothing more than a man." He dreads our falling "into the notion of him as a shadow-personage, whom the imagination has clothed, as it does all its heroes, with a certain divinity, really belonging to and derived from itself." He sees no security against this in a critical confutation of Strauss and his disciples. "That which is a tendency and habit of the heart, is not cured by detecting fallacies in the mode in which it is embodied and presented to the intellect. If you have no other way of shewing Christ not to be a mythical being, or a man elevated into a god by the same process which has deified thousands before and since," you will be sure to fail. (P. 65.)

How, then, is this theory to be met? "Our divines are, in the first place, to deal more honestly with facts of human experience" than they do; "and secondly, they are to connect these facts with principles which they admit to a certain extent, when they are arguing with those who deny them, but which they seldom fairly present to themselves, and still more rarely bring home to the consciences of their suffering fellow-men." (P. 66.) What are the facts? and what the principles?

The facts are those which the author "has tried to

present " in the light of Scripture and observation. The principle is applied to those facts in two ways.

It is applied when we tell "the man who declares that he has a righteousness which no one shall remove from him—"That is true. You have such a righteousness. It is deeper than all the iniquity which is in you. It lies at the very ground of your existence. And this righteousness dwells not merely in a law which is condemning you, it dwells in a Person in whom you may trust. The righteous Lord of man is with you,' not 'in some heaven,'—'in some hell,'—but nigh you, at your heart." (P. 66.)

The author evidently refers to the statement of the Apostle Paul (Romans x. 6-10.) He omits the condition which the apostle attaches to the statement. If the author means what the apostle seems to mean, that the word of the gospel, revealing Christ as 'the righteousness of God,' brings Christ so very near to every man who hears it,—is itself so nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart, that he has but to 'confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in his heart that God has raised him from the dead,' in order to his being saved, and having 'Christ in him the hope of glory ;'—if that is the author's meaning, it is, as has been seen, no more than every earnest evangelical preacher is constantly teaching. But then it is Christ, not in contrast with the law, but in closest union with the law, who is nigh us, at our heart. The righteousness which such a

preacher speaks of, dwells first and primarily "in a law which is condemning us;" and "it dwells in a Person in whom we may trust," because it dwells in Christ, who is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This Christ the word brings nigh to every man,—to me,—so nigh that I have but to open my heart and my mouth to find Christ in both. This is the apostle's doctrine, which "our divines" delight "to bring home to the consciences of their suffering fellow-men."

It would be very satisfactory to find that this is also the doctrine of the author in this Essay,—that there is nothing more than a misunderstanding between him and other divines, arising partly out of the somewhat ideal cast and character of his writings,—that he means what they mean, and only wishes to say more strongly than they do, how near the word of the gospel brings Christ to every man to whom it comes. This, however, cannot be his meaning. According to his view, the word of the gospel must find Christ in every man to whom it comes. It may find Christ dead in the man, as in his tomb; and it may have to effect a resurrection of Christ in the man, as from his tomb. But that is all.

This would seem to be, in part at least, what is meant when the author speaks of the principle being expressed with reference to suffering. You do well, he says to the sufferer, in "maintaining that pain is not good but ill, —a sign of wrong and disorder," "a bondage." "You

cannot stop to settle in what part of you it is,"—you need not,—“it is throughout you, affecting you altogether,—you want a complete emancipation from it.” “Hold fast that conviction. Let no man, divine or layman, rob you of it.” Pain is “a bondage, the sign that a tyrant has in some way intruded himself into this earth of ours. But you are permitted to suffer the consequences of that intrusion, just that you may attain to the knowledge of another fact,—that there is a Redeemer, that he lives, that he is the stronger. That righteous King of your heart, whom you have felt to be so near you, so one with you, that you could scarcely help identifying him with yourself, even while you confessed that you were so evil, he is the Redeemer as well as the Lord of you and of man. Believe that he is so. Ask to understand the way in which he has proved himself to be so. You will find that God, not we, has been teaching you of him”—“has taught you that you have been in chains, but that you have been a willing wearer of the chains. To break them, he must set you free. Self is your great prison-house. The strong man armed, who keeps that prison in safety, must be bound.” (P. 67.)

What does this mean? Is it that when I suffer pain, there rises within me the sense of an oppressor, a tyrant, an intruder, the keeper of a prison, to whom the disorder which pain indicates is to be ascribed,—while at the same time, God teaching me, I discover near me, at

my heart, a Redeemer who is the stronger,—and that this discovery breaks “the rod of the enchanter who holds my will in bondage,” and sets me free? But what if, when I suffer pain, even knowing it to be the consequence of a tyrant’s intrusion, I am haunted with the surmise that my relation to God may have something to do with my subjection to bondage? I feel that in my relation to God may lie the root of the disorder, for that is itself disordered. I ask how I am to be on a right footing with God—how the outstanding question which my sin has raised between my God and myself is to be adjusted? Let me have a Redeemer who comes from God to me to tell me this,—himself to effect the required adjustment;—let him rectify my relation to God;—and the enchanter’s rod is broken. I may suffer pain still, as Job did; and feeling it still to be “not good but ill,” “a sign and witness of disorder,” I may feel also as if I had a right to ask why. But, at all events, I am in a position now to disconnect my suffering of pain from any tyranny of an intruding enemy. And when the Redeemer who comes to tell me of a Father’s mercy and to take me home to a Father’s heart, stands by me in my suffering,—expostulating with me, encouraging me, reminding me of a Father’s wisdom and a Father’s love,—I begin to understand the discipline by which that Father is preparing me for a better experience than that which crowned the trial of Job: and understanding that, “I confess my own baseness,” I acquiesce and

adore. Nay, in this way, I think I could enter perhaps even better than the author himself, were I as true and genuine as he is, into what he says so beautifully about "the gray hairs of the stricken, worn out, desolate man"—being "fresher, freer, more hopeful than the untaught innocence of his childhood,"—as well into what he says of the "deep mystery,"—how God "may use the consequences of the evil to which we have yielded,"—and how he "can make also the deliverance, if it be at present only a partial one, from these consequences,—instruments in our emancipation from the evil itself." (P. 68.)

But it is time to draw these remarks to a close, by briefly noticing what the author says of the Unitarian controversy. He would have it to start from a new point. He rightly exposes the contrast between "the Unitarians discoursing concerning the doings of man," and "those they called enthusiasts concerning his being." He discovers a general dissatisfaction with two opposite theories. The one is "that flimsy doctrine about behaviour, which was all that the religion of rewards and punishments could produce." The other is "that assertion of truths as belonging to the believer and not to other men, which is its antagonist." "Both systems are falling by their own weight. The external moralist fails to produce the results he says are all-important. The exclusive religionist shews himself more worldly than his neighbours." "The exclusive



religionist " is of course the party whom the Unitarian would call an enthusiast. It seems that he asserts truths as belonging to the believer and not to other men. This is a view of what is commonly regarded as evangelical preaching which would require explanation. "Truths belonging to the believer and not to other men," — are not generally asserted by the party in question. The truths which they assert are common to all; and it is their boast and glory to assert them as common to all. They make a distinction, indeed, between those who believe these truths and those who do not. But that is all. Would the author do less? Would he place on the same footing those who believe a truth and those who do not? Or, because he did not place them on the same footing, would he consider that he was asserting a truth belonging to the believer and not to other men? Does he mean that there are no truths to be believed?—no truths, the belief or disbelief of which can make men to differ from one another? The "exclusive religionist" says that there are. And he says no more. Does the author say less?

To start the Unitarian controversy from the admission of our Lord's humanity, and then argue from Scripture that he is more than man, is a mistake now, if indeed it was not a mistake all along. The author would start it from "the experiences of a man's own heart,—those spiritual conflicts of which he has learnt to see the significance," and with which he is to "look upon Jesus



as connected *in some way*.” We thus “get rid of mere texts and narratives” “more easily than Priestley and Belsham,” and “with less of outrage upon scholarship.” We get rid of scriptural interpretation and argument altogether. And “with how much more of delight than they ever betrayed, can we recognise all that was divinest in the life of him who is called the Son of Man; with how much more of freedom and less of exclusiveness can we connect him with all the other great champions of the race!” (P. 74.)

Is it thus that the author “asserts truths” different from those which “the exclusive religionist” asserts as “belonging to the believer and not to other men?” Is it that, on the one hand, he finds the Redeemer, Jesus, the Son of Man, as to “all that was divinest in his life,” in the common experience of man,—and that on the other hand, he connects “him who is called the Son of Man” “with all the other great champions of the race?” Are these the truths which he asserts? Still, even these are truths “belonging to the believers” of them “and not to others,” in the only sense in which this can be intelligently said of the truths asserted by “the exclusive religionist.” And certainly if these are the truths which the author asserts,—concerning the connexion of Jesus, and of all that was divinest in the life of the Son of Man, with the experiences of a man’s own heart,—and his connexion with all the other great champions of the race,—it is time

to ask who and what this Son of Man, this Jesus, really is?

The author in his walk through life stumbles upon "rich mines." Exploring these rich mines in himself, he discovers that "*he* is the worker of them and has wrought them ill; that he is the steward of some one who is the possessor of them; that he is a bankrupt, and guilty." "It becomes a necessity of his inmost spirit, that he should find some one whom he did not create, some one who is not subject to his accidents and changes, some one in whom he may rest for life and death. Who is this?" (P. 75.) I am a bankrupt and guilty. To meet my case I must have some one whom I did not create, and who is not subject to my accidents and changes. Such a one, uncreated and unchanging, rises out of the experience of "Job, and David, and the prophets," of every man, in short,—myself of course included. I certainly have a deep interest in learning why I should "hold this righteous Being to be the Son of God." The demand for him on my part, bankrupt and guilty as I am, and the discovery of him, as meeting my demand,—seem to proceed from the same source,—my own consciousness,—my own experience; "texts and narratives being got rid of." It much concerns me to know somehow in what relation he stands to God, whose bankrupt and guilty steward I am.

## CHAPTER III.

THE REMEDY PROVIDED—THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE  
REDEEMER—THE PERSON.—ESSAYS V. VI.

### ESSAY V.—ON THE SON OF GOD.

MAY not your faith,—your ‘I believe in Jesus Christ, *the only Son of God*,’—be merely the adoption of “those human feelings and notions” which have crowded all mythologies with emanations from God and sons of God? You adopt these human feelings and notions without some of their former adjuncts, and with some new ones of your own, which will drop off in time by a necessary law. You especially connect a high ideal of humanity with a particular person. That ideal will be found to belong to the whole race, not to him. He will retain a high place, not as the only Son of God, but as one of many. (Pp. 76, 77.)

Such, in substance, is the suggestion on the part of Unitarians with which the author proposes to deal at the outset of this Essay. He will not deal with it according to “the ordinary methods of controversy.” These are “entirely out of place when statements of this kind are propounded. The question, whichever way it

is decided, must concern the life and being of every one of us. It must affect the condition of mankind now, and the whole future history of the world. To argue and debate it as if it turned upon points of verbal criticism, as if the determination could be influenced by the greater or less skill in reasoning on either side, as if it could be settled by votes," tends to darken the conscience and make men question the importance or the possibility of finding truth. Better silence than such a mode of treating these doubts; silence, in that case, is both religious reverence and common sense. (P. 77.)

There is an odd combination or confusion here; criticism, reasoning, votes. It is a question of theology that is to be considered; the question of the relation in which the Redeemer stands to God as his only-begotten Son. How it may be put to the vote, it is not easy to see. Perhaps reasoning, as a mere trial of dialectic art, may be unsuitable; and the minute word-catching that lives on syllables may, when applied to Scripture, be offensive. It is not clear, however, that criticism and reasoning,—a scholar-like examination of what the Bible says and the manly exercise of a sound judgment upon it,—are really "out of place" when we are discussing what would seem to be very much, if not entirely, a matter of revelation and discovery on the part of God. But be that as it may, the author distinctly indicates that the question is not to be debated upon Scriptural evidence. It is not to be settled by an appeal to Scripture,—a critical and rea-

sonable examination of the statements of Scripture. The author pursues his usual method. He first analyses the doubts in which the question takes its rise. And then he extracts a product,—to be afterwards identified with some saying or sayings in the Bible, and with the article in the Creed. In that course he is to be followed, with much interest, but with some anxiety.

Starting from the fact of a universal tendency to own and believe in sons of God,—he inquires, “what are those general human feelings which this faith” in sons of God “embodies?” They are three in number. The first is “an instinct of men that their helpers must come to them from some mysterious region; that they cannot be merely children of the earth, merely of their own race.” The second is “a strong persuasion among men, that human relationships have something answering to them in that higher world” whence their heroes come. And the third is the sure conviction, that “unless the superior beings were not only related to one another, but in some way related to *them*, their mere protection would be worth very little; they would not confer the kind of benefits which the inferior asks from them.” (P. 79.)

Our helpers must be from heaven. They must be embraced in relationships of heaven analogous to those of earth. They must partake of the relationships of earth.

These “instincts,”—this “conscience of humanity”—might almost create a presumption that some of “the beings who have done it good” may “have come from

some mysterious source," were it not that men imputed to them so much of their own peculiarities of country and race, their own morbid temperaments, their own corruption and debasement. Sons of God, then, such as these three feelings naturally crave and create, are to be set aside as unworthy and unreal. (Pp. 79, 80.)

"But," says the author, "there is a chapter of human experience which we have not yet looked into. It is that of which I spoke in the last Essay." (P. 80.)

The experience of Job is again rehearsed,—his experimental discovery that "there was, in some mysterious manner, a Redeemer,—an actual person connected with him,—one who he was sure lived,—one who was at the root of his being,—one in whom he *was* righteous." The emphatic *was*, contrasts the idea of a Redeemer in whom every man is righteous with the idea of a Redeemer in whom every man, even the guiltiest, may become righteous, or may be justified. That, however, is not the present question, excepting in so far as it bears upon the next experimental discovery;—that this "actual person" whom Job finds "connected with him," is not "*a* Redeemer but *the* Redeemer." Job is not "a man unlike other men, placed under rare and peculiar conditions which enabled him to ascertain certain facts as true for himself which are not true for his race." "The sufferer has been compelled to feel himself simply a man." This is true; and therefore it is also true that whatever Redeemer Job had, must be a Redeemer whom every



man has,—or may have. To take this last alternative,—to say that he must be a Redeemer whom every man may have, as Job had him,—would not by any means satisfy the author. To him, that would appear equivalent to saying that Job was “a man unlike other men, placed under rare and peculiar conditions which enabled him to ascertain a certain fact as true for himself” and not for his race. But it really is not so. A Redeemer whom every man may have as his own, as truly satisfies the condition of the problem,—which is Job feeling himself to be simply a man,—as a Redeemer whom every man has, or who is in every man. The fact true for himself is true for his race,—equally in either view. A Redeemer liveth who is mine, and whom every man as well as I may have as his,—this is language which does not isolate Job one whit more than his being understood to say;—a Redeemer liveth who is mine, and whom every man as well as I, whether he knows and believes it or not, actually has as his. The author assumes, without proof, that if Job is not to be regarded “as a man unlike other men,” but as “feeling himself simply to be a man,”—every man, merely in virtue of his being a man, must have the living Redeemer as his;—not in right but in fact—not *de jure* but *de facto*;—exactly as he was Job’s, at the crisis of his experience at which he said—‘I know that my Redeemer liveth.’ It is this unproved assumption which really lies at the root of the author’s doctrine that Christ is in every man.



He advances now a step. Upon the man to whose "innermost heart and spirit God himself is discovering his righteousness as well as his sin,—the avenger as well as the oppressor,"—"the question forces itself; Is this Redeemer,"—that is, the righteousness of the man, the avenger,—"so closely connected with the human sufferer, not connected also with that divine instructor who answered him out of the whirlwind? Was this righteousness which Job perceived, not the righteousness of God himself? Was he as widely separated from his creature as ever? Was there no meaning in the assertion that one was the image of the other?" (P. 83.)

The Redeemer, the righteousness, the avenger, must therefore be connected with God as closely as he is connected with the human sufferer; otherwise "the sense of separation from him,—the longing to plead with him,"—which Job felt, is not met. The "cry for a daysman between them" is not heard.

In this instinct or experience the author finds the "explanation of those many sons of God of whom he has been speaking." He regards this as "the radical and universal experience" which "interprets those superficial and partial ones." First, "Job could not think of this daysman, near as he was to his very being, except as one who had come to him,—who had stooped to him,—who belonged to a world of mystery." Secondly, "Job could not think of him except as related to the invisible Lord of all." Thirdly, "Job's most intimate con-

viction was, that he was related to himself." These are the three conditions of the mythological sons of God. They are realised here ; and without "the causes which make those dreams of demigods and heroic men local, temporary, artificial." For, in the first place, "it is from the one being, the Lord of the spirit of all flesh, that this Son of God must have come." Next, "he must be spiritual, like that Being ; for it is the spirit and not the sense of the sufferer which confesses him." And then, "whatever righteousness and goodness are perceived by the erring, trusting, broken-hearted penitent to be in the one,—speaking to his sorrows and wants,—must be the image and reflex of an absolute righteousness and grace in the other, which he could only adore." (P. 84.)

This is the author's analysis of human experience ; and this the product.

He now reverses the process. He deduces from Christian theology, especially from the writings of the Apostle John, a Son of God,—an only-begotten Son,—to be identified with the Son of God discovered or developed in the experience which he has described.

But before entering upon his synthesis, or process of deduction, it is necessary to ask, to what do his analysis and its product amount ? Before I judge how far the Son of God concerning whom the Apostle John writes, is to be recognised as the Son of God whom the author has found in the instincts of humanity,—I must be allowed to ask,—who and what is the Son of God developed or

discovered by this last method? Does he meet my case? Does he exhaust my experience?

Certainly not,—if I am “a bankrupt and guilty.” You tell me first, that I must have a helper who comes from heaven, who is related to God in heaven as closely as he is related to me. You tell me also secondly, that this helper is the sense of righteousness,—the kind of protest against pain,—which sin and suffering call forth in me. And you tell me, moreover, that this helper is the Son of God. But what of my bankruptcy and my guilt? Will any personification,—will any deification,—of my experience, while bankrupt and guilty, even if you make a Son of God, an only-begotten Son of God, out of it,—meet my case? I say at once, No. I say that if I am to form any notion of the Son of God whom I need, and who alone can satisfy the demands of my conscience and heart,—he must not merely be one who represents my experience, and stands in a certain undefined connexion with God as well as with me. He must be one who comes to me, outside of me, directly from God; not lapsing or gliding into me, but speaking to me; and telling me how my debt is to be discharged and my guilt disposed of. That is the sort of helper whom, as “a bankrupt and guilty,” I yearn for. And I cannot easily believe that any other can be my helper, in that sense, but only one coming straight from the bosom of the Father,—not coming through the circuitous channel of my subjective experience, but directly, as a living

Person from a living Person,—entitled and authorised to tell me that he is the Son of God, and that he has his Father's commission to discharge my debt and expiate my guilt. As a bankrupt and guilty, I can accept no helper from within me as sufficient, however authenticated from without and from above. I desiderate a helper who, altogether apart from his relation to me, can give me assurance of his relation to the Holy One, and his power on earth to forgive sins.

But let the theological or Scriptural deduction, which is to fit into the experimental induction, be taken fairly and fully into account.

The author disclaims,—what “many readers fancy,” that “when we speak of a Person who is at once divine, and the ground of humanity, we must be assuming an incarnation.” (P. 84.) What is meant by a divine Person being the ground of humanity, is not clear. According to the representation given in the previous Essays and in this one, it would seem to mean that all human experience of the right kind subsists in this divine Person,—that it is he in all men who originates that experience,—who is himself that experience. But at any rate, there is no reference as yet to an incarnation. “Christian theology does not speak of an incarnation, until it has spoken of ‘an only-begotten Son, begotten of his Father before all worlds, of one substance with him.’” This article of the Creed, thus expressed, is the author's starting-point now.

He laments that "these words, though in former times they were the strength and nourishment of confessors and martyrs, have come, in modern days, to be regarded as mere portions of a school divinity." "Learned men must maintain them by subtle arguments and an army of texts." "Ordinary men are to receive them implicitly, because it is dangerous to doubt them." But they "have no hold upon our common daily life, can be tested by no experience." Those who are busy with religious feelings and states of mind will pass them by with indifference, as not concerning vital godliness." (P. 85.)

This is a grave allegation, for which, however, there is no apparent ground except the author's fixed idea that to set about proving a doctrine directly out of Scripture is at once and *ipso facto* to make it a dry and arid dogma. But is it so? I may happen to think that the truth concerning the Redeemer's relation to the Father as his only-begotten Son is best ascertained, and indeed can only be ascertained, by the devout and intelligent study of the Bible;—that authentic information and a correct belief on this subject are to be obtained, not from the instincts and aspirations of man,—the experience of Job or any one else,—but from the written revelation of God. That may be my opinion. Acting upon it, I examine the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; I compare passages; and praying for the help of the Spirit who inspired them, I use my faculties of understanding and reason, to the best of my ability, for in-

terpreting these passages, and gathering up the sum and substance of what, when fairly taken together, they concur in teaching. Of course, if I am a mere sophist or Dryasdust, I may conduct the investigation with a chopping of logic and a marshalling of words and syllables worthy of Martinus Scriblerus himself. But there is nothing in the process itself to preclude the deepest personal earnestness. On the contrary, I engage in it believing that my highest interests are involved in the issue. And when the issue is actually reached,—when I rise from searching the Scriptures and weighing the scriptural evidence,—it is with a heart full of the discovery which God makes to me of the Son of his love. It is no idea of my own that I grasp as the image of what I think my Redeemer, and the Redeemer of men, must be. It is no mere idea of my own, verified, authenticated, reflected, in the Divine word. It is ‘what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man.’ It is the unfolding of the Father’s bosom, in which the Son has ever dwelt. Angels behold and worship. I too behold. I see the Son coming forth from the Father’s bosom, to do the Father’s will, to be my Redeemer from the curse of the law, the Redeemer of the lost ; and to give us the adoption of sons. Believing, I enter into his relation to the Father ;—and hearing him, as he prays at parting with his disciples, use words like these,—‘Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me,’—I rejoice with trembling ; I stand in awe.



This is no "school divinity," having no hold on common life, which can be tested by no experience. If men busy with religious feelings and states of mind, pass it by,—or if men trying to spin an entire Christology and Theology out of their own head or heart will have none of it,—I cannot part with it for any Christ in every man, the ground of humanity, who cannot be thought of except as related somehow to me and to the Invisible Lord of all. In the deep conviction of my heart, this is the essence of vital godliness. I thank the learned men who maintain it by arguments and texts, who enable me to receive it intelligently and defend it Scripturally. I thank above all the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ who by the power of his Spirit causes me to know—that he to whom my faith unites me is indeed the only-begotten Son of the Highest.

But to return. The author looks with far more complacency on objectors, in this instance, than on the ordinary run of advocates. "We owe it to them" "that these truths," the mysteries connected with the Sonship, "are compelled to come forth from amidst the cobwebs in which we have left them, to prove that they can bear the open day, and that they bring a more glorious sunlight with them, which may penetrate into all the obscurest caverns of human thoughts and fears." (P. 85.)

The objectors are those who raise the question at the outset of this Essay;—what is there in Christ the Son of God, beyond the universal idea of sons of God being



the deliverers of men? They scatter the "school-divinity" delusion; it is not very clearly stated how. "The Apostle St John," however, being our guide,— "we shall find" among other things, that the mysteries in question "can set us free from a host of vulgar earth-born notions and superstitions which we have adopted from the cloister or the crowd into our Christian dialect and practice; that they can shew how the one fundamental truth of God's love and charity makes all other facts,—those belonging to the most inward discipline of the heart, those concerning the most outward economy of the world,—sacred and luminous." (Pp. 85, 86.)

It might be wrong to assume here that the "vulgar earth-born notions and superstitions adopted from the cloister or the crowd," are the opinions commonly entertained respecting the necessity of an expiation of guilt, and the reconciliation of justice and mercy,—not in the divine mind but in the divine government,—as bearing upon the pardon of offenders,—the justification of the ungodly. The author does not say what those chimeras are from which we are to be set free. But he holds that, under the guidance of the Apostle John, we are to explain all human experience and all the divine government by the one truth of God's love and charity;—and that, too, upon the ground of the "mysteries" connected with there being "an only-begotten Son, begotten of his Father before all worlds, of one substance with him." For himself, "he only sees at a great dis-

tance" the much-desired consummation which he hopes and prays that others may be raised up to hasten. He gives, however, one illustration of "the relation in which a belief in the Son of God stands to that consciousness of bondage which is inseparable from a consciousness of sin." (P. 86.)

The passage which he selects is that in which Christ reasons with the Jews on the subject of liberty. (John viii. 31-36.) He says that he would not quote it if he "traced in it any allusion to the belief of his incarnation, or to that passion which had not yet taken place." Whatever allusion there may be to one or both of these facts, the incarnation and the passion, our Lord's argument does undoubtedly turn upon a higher view than either. The essential relation of the Son to the Father is the ground of the appeal. You, who say that you are Abraham's children and were never in bondage to any man, commit sin, and are the servants of sin. Such is your position with reference to him by whom you have been overcome. And what is your position with reference to God, to whom originally you belong, and in whose house you have to make good your footing? You are servants, not children, in the house; and the only standing you can have in the house is the standing of servants. The servant, however, has no permanent standing in the house; and especially if he becomes the servant of another master, he can claim no right to abide in his original

master's family. But the Son has a full title and firm footing. 'The servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the Son abideth ever; if the Son therefore make you free, you are free indeed.'

Two things are plain here, if words have any meaning. The first is, that it is the indefeasible right of the Son to abide in the house,—the house or family of God,—as being not a servant but the Son,—which fits him for being the emancipator. The second is, that the emancipation consists in his making the servants of sin, who cannot always abide in the house, partakers of his own right to abide in it for ever. It is a great truth, that to be made partakers of the Son's right to abide in the house for ever, is the only freedom. This is "the glorious liberty of the children of God." We then wage war with evil and the evil spirit,—“shaking off the yoke from our wills,”—strong in the belief that 'greater is he that is for us than all they that are against us,'—'greater is he that is in us than he that is in the world.'

The author's view of our Lord's teaching in this passage omits apparently these two thoughts. He dwells rather on the idea, that to recognise "a Son of God" actually ruling in the house, to whom the house belongs—"not to the poor slave who fancied it was his,"—is our redemption, our freedom. The house, in that view, is man's nature—men themselves. "Over this house of theirs, not made with hands, there is a Son actually ruling, a Son of God." "To confess

the true Lord of it, to give up his own imaginary claim to it, which is submission to a real servitude," "to own that a Son, an actual Son of God is his Lord,"—is the secret of freedom. "This is the true Hercules that takes Prometheus from his rock, and slays the vulture who is preying upon him." (P. 88.)

Now what there is in the owning of a Son, an actual Son of God,—as Lord of the house, Lord of me,—to disenthral my will and make me free, I cannot, if I follow the author's order of thought upon this subject, understand. I can understand it better if I reverse that order; and instead of rising from human experiences to a divine relation, begin with the divine relation, and bring it down to these human experiences. The Holy One himself tells me, what I never could have guessed otherwise,—what no instincts of mine nor the instincts embodied in all the mythologies could ever have suggested,—that he has a Son,—an only-begotten Son,—who has been with him, in his bosom, from everlasting. The Son comes forth,—I care not for the present whether in the flesh or not,—he is ever coming forth. And he also tells me what no instincts of mine or of any man could tell me;—he tells me perhaps what these instincts mean, but what is far more important, he tells me of what will meet them. He tells me how his Father loveth him, and how his Father loveth me and every man. He tells me that he has authority from his Father to deal with me and with every man for the settlement

of whatever claim or charge the Holy One has against me or against any man. He tells me also that he has power to renovate my nature and every man's nature. And to crown all, he tells me that he has overcome the evil spirit, and that neither I nor any man need be separated from his Father, or subject to the evil spirit, any longer. For the Son to tell me this, not as identifying himself with my instincts, or my instincts with himself, but as making a direct communication to me from his Father,—for the Son thus to tell me this, is to tell me what, if I believe it, makes me free indeed.

And what, in reality, is the other view? I find in me an instinct,—or whatever else it may be called,—something, however, which does not acquiesce in sin and suffering, but is contrary to both. I recognise in that instinct a life,—a living person. He is near me,—in me,—my Redeemer. I feel that he must be from above, from heaven. I am certain that as he is connected with me, so he must be connected with the Holy One, the great Father. I own him as a Son—a true Son of God,—the Son. And I am free. At the very best this is only intensifying to the highest point,—to the measure of divinity itself,—a sense and a power already in me,—the sense of righteousness and the power of resistance. If any earnest men reach emancipation in that way, one would think that it must be through some such kind of unavowed, and almost unconscious, faith as the author sometimes ascribes to the better class of Unitarians.

It must be through their believing more than they themselves consider that they believe,—through their ascribing far more of a true and divine personality to the Son as being with the Father from eternity, and far more of a distinct, objective reality to the coming forth of the Son from the bosom of the Father ever since time began,—than might appear to be implied in their own statements and representations.

That the contrast between these views is fairly stated, and the account of the author's theory correct, may appear from what he says when, after quoting the opening lines of "In Memoriam," he proposes to "look courageously" at what he calls "the popular dogma." That dogma, as he represents it, finds "certain great ideas floating in the vast ocean of traditions which the old world exhibits to us." And it holds that "the gospel appropriated some of these, and that we are to detect them and eliminate them from its own traditions." Probably the author means to refer to the common opinion that many of the wild fables in the old mythologies,—Trinities, Sons of God, Incarnations, Victims, and such like,—are corrupt traditional remains of the primæval revelations before and after the Flood. That opinion it is not necessary to discuss. It might have some bearing on the author's previous analysis: it has little to do with his argument here. He disposes of it summarily. He states again in opposition to it his own view of "the great ideas floating" in that wide sea.



They "demand," he says, "to be substantiated." "What we ask for," he adds, "is—not a system which shall put these ideas in their proper places, and so make them the subjects of our partial intellects, but—a revelation which shall shew us what they are, why we have these hints and intimations of them, what the eternal substances are which correspond to them." The "popular dogma" certainly does not want the system he sets aside, any more than he himself wants it. But it does want something more than the author desiderates. It wants what will not merely substantiate the instincts of humanity, but satisfy their cravings. "We beseech the Father of lights, if he is the God of infinite charity we proclaim him to be, to tell us"—not "whether all our thoughts of freedom and truth have proceeded from the father of lies," (p. 90)—but whether He has any communication to make to us, in and through his Son, which may fit into these thoughts,—bring the real economy of heaven to meet the real experience of earth, and so solve the problem of humanity.

There is valuable matter in the closing portion of this Essay. How far the author is right in owning so great an obligation to Unitarians, first for their assertion of the subordination of the Son, and secondly for their protest against idolatry,—it is not necessary to inquire. He succeeds in establishing, with not a little both of power and of pathos, a great truth, not often enough attended to. It is this:—that the creature, invested



with high and noble qualities, either truly or by the fond imagination of admirers, must always be drawing men away from the Supreme, and leading them into virtual idolatry. The only security lies in the discovery that the ideal of humanity is the Son of God; that the perfect human hero, swallowing up in himself all hero-worship, turns out to be one who is "of the same substance with the Father." There is no answer to "the Straussians," with their appeal to the multitudinous "sons of God," who have left "their foot-prints on every different soil," all of them demanding a God,—either "an abstraction," or a "Father;"—there is no "escape" from "the worship of ten thousand imaginary Buddhas and demigods;"—unless it be in the brutish worship of Mammon, or in the acknowledgment of the Son of God, and the belief of what he tells us of himself when he says, 'I and my Father are one.'

Finally, the author asks the parties with whom he pleads, to consider "whether they can avoid the acknowledgment of *fleshly* beings made into gods, with all their infirmities and crimes, if they are not prepared to confess that there is an only-begotten Son of God, who has been made flesh." (Pp. 93-97.)

Thus the question of Incarnation is raised.

#### ESSAY VI.—THE INCARNATION.

"The hearts of the people, as much in the East as

in the West, demanded incarnations." The sons of God among the Greeks were real flesh and blood. The Orientals rather dealt in emanations, shrinking from the contact with flesh and blood. The Jews were familiar with angels or sons of God, "persons, not abstractions," "conversing with human beings as if they were of the same kind;"—and yet not embodied or incarnate. Spiritual themselves, they "leave in us a strong impression of spirituality," making us feel that we must be spiritual also. "One higher Angel," in particular, "one Son of God," they had "no difficulty in acknowledging," "above all the rest." "The formal Scribes," indeed, "might expect merely the coming of a great king and Messiah." But there were those who perceived this divine Person,—“this mysterious Teacher,”—“tracing him through their Scriptures,”—“not confining his illuminations to the wise of their own land,” but yet believing “that the law and the prophets interpreted his relation to God and to the souls of men as no other books did, and that their nation was chosen to be an especial witness of his presence.” (Pp. 98–100.)

But all combined against the true Incarnation. “The chief struggle of all minds in the first centuries after the Church had established itself in the world, was against this belief,—I say emphatically and deliberately, in *all* minds.” So the author puts the case. And after a brief allusion to the different aspects of the Gnostic controversy, he resolves the general offence taken, “when

the voice went from a band of despised men, '*the Word, or the Son of God, has been made flesh, and dwelt among us,*'"—into three maxims common to all the objecting "schools." "They held, first, that it was possible to know God without an incarnation; secondly, that it is not right or possible, that a perfectly good being should be tempted as men are tempted; thirdly, that all we have to look for is a deliverer of some choice spirits out of the corruption and ruin of humanity, not a deliverer of man himself, of his spirit, his soul and his body." (Pp. 100-102.)

The author vindicates the Incarnation by "reversing these propositions." In the reverse of these three propositions he finds "the convictions which have sustained the general creed of the Church." "First, we accept the fact of the Incarnation because we feel that it is impossible to know the absolute and invisible God, as man needs to know him, and craves to know him, without an incarnation." Thus the first proposition is broadly enough reversed. But the question occurs,—is the proposition, thus reversed, to be accepted as universal? Are there no other intelligent beings besides men who need to know God? Is it universally true that in order to the Creator being known by his creatures, there must be on the part of the Creator an assumption of the nature of the creature? Or if this is a necessity of the human family alone, in what peculiarity of the human family does it take its rise? And what is the explanation of

the peculiarity? Apparently the author does mean to restrict the proposition to the race of man. "It is impossible," he says, "to know God, as man needs and craves to know him, without an incarnation." But then, how is this? Is it because man has brought himself into a position in which no knowledge of God can be of avail to him without an incarnation? Then, there must be something in his position which an incarnation meets, and which an incarnation alone can meet. The Incarnation thus becomes, not a mode of revealing, but a fact revealed.

The inquiry now suggested is not irrelevant or impertinent. Is the assumption by the Creator of the nature of the creature, an essential condition of the creature's knowledge of the Creator? Then, in that case, incarnation is a mode of revelation to man,—just as angelisation, or whatever else the assumption of the angelic nature might be called, would on that supposition be the mode of revelation to angels. On the other hand, is the assumption of human nature by the Son of God an act of condescension rendered necessary by some peculiarity of the human race which makes it impossible for them otherwise to know God? In that case, the Incarnation can be the means of our knowing God, only because it removes that peculiarity, whatever it is. If the peculiarity is in us, personally,—if it attaches to our nature,—it is hard to see how any presentation to us of God, even in the Word made flesh, can rid us of that.

If, on the other hand, the peculiarity lies in our relation to what is outside of us,—to God,—then there must be a readjustment of that relation. And it must be as a step towards such a readjustment, or as effecting it, that the Incarnation contributes to our knowledge of God.

Let it be observed, however, that the question, Whether God can be known, or ever is known, by any order of intelligences, otherwise than through the Son, is not the question here raised. Nor is there any controversy about the benefit which we have in knowing God as exhibited to us in the person of one who shares our nature. Let the Lord's own declaration be thankfully received ; — ‘Whosoever hath seen me hath seen the Father.’ Still the inquiry must be pressed,—Wherein consists the impossibility of our knowing God, as we need and crave to know him, without an incarnation ?—and how does the Incarnation remove that impossibility ?

The author seems to put the matter thus. We find in human beings qualities of goodness, an element or sense of truth, and certain family relationships. Men are gentle or brave. They are friends, brothers, fathers. They have a glimpse of a truth beyond their life and death for which they can suffer and die. “Are all these facts and feelings delusions?” “No. It has pleased the Father to shew us what he is.” And it has pleased him to shew us this in a Man who says that he comes from the Father ;—and who in himself,—in his manifest fulness of grace and truth, and in his ascribing all the

glory that shines in him to the Father,—gives evidence sufficient to establish his claim to be believed. Thus all divine perfections are concentrated, and become apparent, in this Man, who satisfies the craving we have for a real ground of the good, the affectionate, the true, as discovered among our fellow-men, and who at the same time ‘seeks not his own glory but his glory that sent him.’

In accordance with the author’s view, it is not difficult to see, in the first place, how this Man must be the type and representative, not of what distinguishes men from one another, but of what man universally is ;—so that not a throne, or a palace, or any singular career, must be his, but a manger for his birth, and what all may recognise as the common lot for his life. Nor is it difficult to see, secondly, how he must be not “*a* shrine of the Holiest” but “*the* One ;”—how “the glory of God,” instead of being diffused through many images, “must be concentrated in one.” “That it may be diffused through many, it must be concentrated in one.” (P. 108.)

It might be unfair to say that this is really nothing more than the manufacture of a human image or representation of the Holiest, out of whatever goodness, or truth, or love, may be observed in the excellent of the earth. The author does not think so ; but the thought may occur to others. A man is found who combines in himself perfectly all human excellency ; he gives all the glory of that excellency to God ; and he declares himself to be the Son of God, sent to reveal his Father.



Is there anything here beyond a model man, in whom the glory of God, or his moral image, which shines in a fragmentary way throughout the human race, is concentrated and revealed?

The author deals with a second objection to the Incarnation, urged by those who say,—“It destroys the idea of a Son of God to suppose him in contact with the temptations of ordinary men.” (P. 109.) This proposition, also, he reverses.

Now if the author here, or in the previous essay to which he refers (Essay Third), recognised fairly these two elements of evil,—natural corruption and Satanic temptation,—as distinct from one another, however the one may act upon the other,—his treatment of the objection which he is now discussing would on the whole be good. He says well, of the “actual trial” in which the superiority of righteousness over “an actual” evil spirit is to be tested and ascertained;—“If we suppose that the Son of God had any advantage in that trial, any power save that which came from simple trust in his Father, from the refusal to make or prove himself his Son instead of depending on his word and pledge, we shall not feel that a real victory has been won.” But then he adds immediately;—“Thence will come (alas! have come) the consequences of supposing our flesh to be accursed in itself, our bodies or our souls to be subject to a necessary evil, and not to be holy creatures of God, made for all good.” (P. 111.) Of course, this



cannot on any account be admitted to be a fair antithesis. The author, with all his repudiation of logical accuracy, can scarcely believe that it is. Our bodies and our souls may be, and are, holy creatures of God, made for all good. And yet they may be, and are, in consequence of the Fall, subject to a necessary evil. The author himself admits that they are subject to the necessary evil of a conflict with the evil spirit. Is this consistent with their being holy creatures of God, made for all good? If it be, how can it be inconsistent with their being so, to hold, besides, that they are subject to the necessary evil of corruption in themselves, and of liability to the curse or condemnation of God?

But the main point is this. So far as temptation from without is concerned,—such temptation as Adam in innocency had to meet,—it is most important to remember that our Lord did not take advantage of any power or privilege belonging to him as the Son, but relied, as other men must do, on the promises and on the Spirit of God. The question, however, remains—Was his flesh like that of other men in all respects? Was he, in soul and body, altogether like other men? Are they guilty and corrupt by nature,—as they come into this world and live in this world, before they undergo the new birth, whatever that may be? Was he thus guilty and corrupt? The author does not say that he was. He certainly holds the reverse. But just as certainly he holds that there is no subjection to evil in men

generally, at all essentially different from that trial of strength with the evil spirit, in which, as he rightly says, the Son of God had not "any power save that which came from simple trust in his Father."

The truth is, the author evades the difficulty,—which is, not to conceive of a Son of God, or the Son of God, contending with an evil power,—but to admit that his holy divine nature can have united to it our human nature, as that nature has exhibited itself in all the specimens of it which have existed since the Fall. Is the miracle of our Lord's birth a reality? And if so, what is its meaning? It may be gravely doubted how far Unitarians, or any others, can accept the author's account of the Incarnation, without knowing more of what he holds on the subject of the change which our human nature experienced when sin entered into the world, and also on the question whether the human nature of the Son of God was, or was not, in all respects the same as our human nature since then has been.

The question just put—Is the miracle of our Lord's birth a reality?—is at least a natural one when the Incarnation is the subject under consideration; and the omission of all notice of it in an essay on that subject, must appear strange to ordinary theological readers. In a subsequent essay, when he is closing his discussion of the person and work of the Redeemer, the author partly explains the omission. "Respecting the Conception, I have been purposely silent; not because I

have any doubt about that article or am indifferent to it, but because I believe that the word *miraculous*, which we ordinarily connect with it, suggests an untrue meaning." "The simple language of the Evangelists," he adds, "offers itself as the only natural and rational account of the method by which the eternal Son of God could have taken human flesh." (P. 313.) For the fuller expression of his thoughts on this subject, he sends us to his sermon "on marriage," in "The Church a Family;" in which, speaking of "the received doctrine respecting the way in which the Son of God became man," as "the simplest that we could adopt," he gives this as the reason: "Any other contains something which shocks the heart and conscience, something which limits the universal Man to narrow, partial conditions, something which interferes with the full and clear recognition of him as the only-begotten of the Father." (P. 97.) The author is speaking, in that sermon, of the manner of our Lord's birth, chiefly in connexion with the institutions of domestic and social life. Any allusion to it in these Essays must have had a more general reference to the quality or character of the "human flesh," or human nature, which he "took." Was it in all respects the same as ours since the Fall has been? Was he, as to his manhood, altogether such as we are? Or did the manner of his birth secure an exemption,—an immunity,—from guilt and corruption, which does not belong to us? The author's vague phraseology may

be allowed to pass, because no one would choose to discuss in detail such questions as he suggests. The ordinary theological doctrine, however, that the birth of the Son of God was miraculous, and that it was miraculous because its being so was the necessary condition of his becoming man, true and very man,—and yet becoming man, free from all that taint of criminality and pollution which is the common inheritance of Adam's race ; this doctrine, as a doctrine revealed in Scripture, will explain the recorded historical fact at least as well as any *à priori* idea of what might be the mode of incarnation most worthy of the eternal Son of God, and most fitted to constitute him the universal Man.

The understanding, the conscience, the heart of man,—of any man of sound sense and right feeling,—of the man who most thoroughly enters into the author's vivid representations of sin, and the plague of self, and the sense of bondage ; unsophisticated human nature in short, may be allowed to say, how far a Son of God, ever so intimately revealed as in me, and ever so manifestly embodied or incarnate before me, can really meet my case and be my Redecmer,—if his consenting to be one with me, and to make common cause with me, implies his being originally, in his manhood, no better than I am. And it matters little whether you tell me, as to this common manhood,—that he is, as I am, fallen ;—or that I am, as he is, unfallen. In the one case, you outrage my veneration ; in the other, my consciousness.

Even "a strong Son of God," becoming the man I feel myself to be, guilty, corrupt, and frail, cannot be accepted as my Redeemer.

3. The third gnostical refinement with which the author deals is the "belief that Christ descended from some pure and ethereal world, to save certain elect souls from the pollutions of the flesh and the death which was consequent upon them: not to save the human race; above all not to save that which was designated as the poor, ignoble, accursed body." The refutation of this refinement he discovers in our Lord's addressing himself, not to select companies, but to multitudes of all classes, even the lowest; in his care also for the bodies of men, and his manner of dealing with "pain, disease, death,"—which he treated "not as portions of a divine scheme, but as proofs that it has been violated; as witnesses of the presence of a destroyer, who is to be resisted and cast out." (P. 112.)

This is a right protest "against all persons who, on any grounds whatever, religious or philosophical, are maintaining an exclusive position, striving to separate themselves from other human beings, or wishing to disparage animal existence as the only way of exalting that which is intellectual or spiritual." (P. 113). Undoubtedly Christ, as man, possesses the human nature, not as peculiar to some, but as common to all; and he possesses that nature entire. Its animal life, not less than its intellectual and spiritual life, was and is his. To iso-

late ourselves from other men, or to undervalue the body, is practically to deny the incarnation of the Son of God. So far the author is in harmony with all sound divines.

And it is a service rendered to the cause of truth, as well as to many struggling men in the battle of life, when any competent person, such as this author, illustrates, as he can so well illustrate, the aspect which the incarnation of the Son of God—his true and proper manhood—has towards humanity in general; towards all human fellowships and relationships; towards all the toils and trials of human life; towards all members of the human family. It may be admitted that this fact or doctrine,—the assumption of our nature by the Son of God,—has sometimes been viewed by divines and exhibited by preachers, too much as if it were merely a means to an end,—a step in the work of redemption; and that in consequence of this, its significance and value, considered simply in itself, may have been unintentionally somewhat overlooked. There is always danger lest we substitute a thing, a transaction, a plan, or whatever it may be called, instead of a real and living person, as the object of our habitual confidence and contemplation; and he who calls us from the mere belief of a system, to living communion with the Divine Man, deserves our thanks. Probably, a candid observer of modern evangelical ministrations would allow that the person of the Saviour is very prominently brought forward, and that he is earnestly commended to the loving embrace of his disciples; while



pains are also taken to shew, how the mere fact of his becoming man stamps a certain character of sacredness on human nature, wherever it is found and in whatever circumstances ; how it elevates and hallows all human experience ; how it invests every human being with a value which his fellow men cannot estimate enough. By all means, however, let more be done in this direction. Let all such considerations be urged as are fitted to break down barriers of separation, to quicken our sense of responsibility in our dealings with one another, and to put an end to the unseemly divorce of the religious from the common life. If the author will labour on in that vocation, every right-minded and right-hearted Christian will bid him God-speed. But at the same time, it is not necessary for such a practical use of it, and it is not possible in a theological point of view, to isolate the doctrine of the Incarnation. It must be considered in connexion with two other doctrines at least,—the one, the doctrine concerning the nature of man since the Fall, and the other, the doctrine concerning the nature of the undertaking for which the Son of God was born into this world. And in the end it will be found, that when it is so represented as to be consistent both with the belief of fallen man's depravity and guilt, and with the belief of a real vicarious sacrifice of propitiation,—the Incarnation,—the manhood of our blessed Lord,—becomes only the more valuable, and the more universally available for all the purposes of man's life,—personal, social, spiritual, and



divine. It is because the author's representation of it does not appear to be consistent with right and scriptural ideas of the Fall and the Atonement, that a further examination of this Essay is indispensable.

The author speaks of "theology making its appeal to the great human heart;" and of "the witness which that has found for the gospel and for the fact of an incarnation," in those very passages which might be "offensive" to certain classes of religionists. They might be offensive, as implying almost too close a contact of what is divine with what is human, even in "the lowest types of the race," as well as in the mere "animal nature and animal wants" of the man. Certainly, the humanity of Christ connects him, and it may be said, identifies him, with our humanity, throughout all its range and in all its parts. The author, however, evidently holds that the Incarnation has, by itself alone, accomplished all that our humanity requires for its emancipation. "*The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;*" this is St John's summary of the whole matter." But how does the incarnate Son defeat the devil? First, by "revealing the Father, destroying in human flesh the great calumny of the devil that man has not a Father in heaven;" secondly, by "submitting to temptations, and so proving in human flesh that man is not the subject and thrall of the tempter;" and thirdly, by affirming, for man's entire deliverance out of bondage, "that his own humanity is the standard of that which

each man bears, and is that to which man shall be raised." (Pp. 113, 114.)

In connexion with this view of redemption, the author remarks that "when the Son of God was to be manifested to men," a prophet came, "not to argue and prove the probability of an incarnation," but to preach, "saying, '*Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*'" Such a call to repentance, he says well, is "the true way of bringing evidence for any of the articles of Christian theology." He urges its importance, accordingly, in connexion with the article now under consideration; earnestly desiring to carry Unitarians as well as others along with him. And then he resumes the subject of the Baptist's preaching, taking it as it is recorded in the gospel by John. "When St John explains the object of the Baptist's mission, he does not use the language of the other evangelists. He says, '*He came to bear witness of the LIGHT, that all men through him might believe.*' This is not a mere equivalent for the words, '*Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand;*' but it gives the innermost force of them." And that "innermost force,"—"taking away the vagueness" of the mere call to repent,—seems to amount, according to the author, to something like this; "There is a light within you, close to you. Oh, turn to it."—Is it "my conscience?"—"Call it that, or what you please; but in God's name, my friend, do not cheat yourself with a phrase. I mean a reality; I mean that which has to do with your innermost being;

I mean something which does not proceed from you or belong to you ; but which is there, searching you and judging you. Nay ! stay a moment. I mean that this light comes from a Person,—from the King and Lord of your heart and spirit,—from the Word,—the Son of God. When I say, Repent ; I say, Turn and confess his presence. You have always had it with you. You have been unmindful of it.” (Pp. 113–117.)

The author anticipates, here, that not only Unitarians, but good orthodox souls, may be startled, and cries of “Mysticism,” and so forth, may be heard on all sides. He may be at ease on that score. Sometimes, indeed, his vague idealism might bring to recollection “the lore of the Alexandrian fathers,”—or “Fénélon, Madame Guion, Jacob Böhme, &c. ;” and sometimes also it suggests the reflection that the reveries of such dreamers as Irving, and the birth-throes of such pregnant thinkers as Coleridge, may be the sources of the author’s theological speculations. But the hard fate that ties him to the Unitarian stake keeps him always within the range of terrestrial attraction. If he is chargeable with mysticism at all, it certainly has more in it of what is allied to the prosaic subtlety of modern rationalism, than of anything resembling either Alexandrian lore, or the enthusiastic rapture of the quietists. At any rate, he may brave the reproach of mysticism, boldly and with a safe conscience. How far he can separate himself as easily from the colder creed,—whether of the Friends, or of the Materialists,—

which would resolve all revelation into inward experience, and identify Christ the Redeemer with conscience or the light within,—is another matter altogether.

Mysticism apart, then, — and the author provokes this sally,—let his manner of following up the call to repentance, based upon an appeal to the inward light, be carefully observed.

Not only “Unitarians,” but “many among us,” are “bewildered by the proposition, ‘*Christ took flesh.*’ What Christ? they would ask, if they were not withheld by some fear. Is not Jesus of Nazareth the Christ?” Surely this is an excess of timidity. The proposition, ‘*Christ took flesh,*’ has no particular sacredness attached to it, and is, in fact, by no means very defensible. It is a convenient stepping-stone, however, for the author. He finds that the “difficulty” which it occasions “is not relieved, but increased, by the emphasis with which divines, here and in Germany, are dwelling on the words, ‘*God manifest in the flesh.*’” Not that “these divines” put on their “spectacles” to examine the “O,” with or without the line, “in the Epistle to Timothy;” but “they take these words as expressing the very sense of the Gospel.” So also does the author. But, having an eye to “Unitarian difficulties,” he sees a danger, lest—“setting forth the manifestation,” and not sufficiently “declaring who is the manifester”—we “lead people to suppose that the Image of the Holy One had no reality till it was presented through a human body to

men, or at least, that till then, this Image had no relation to the creature who is said in Scripture to be formed in it." We thus, it seems, cut off "the Old Testament economy" from "the revelation of the Son of God." And "what is worse still, by this means the heart and conscience of human beings become separated from that revelation. It stands outside, as if it were presented to the eye, not to them; as if those who saw Christ in the flesh must really have known him for that reason, whereas every sentence of the Gospels is telling us that they did not." (P. 119, 120.)

Here is confusion worse confounded! We seem to teach, either first, that the Holy One had no image of himself before the Incarnation; or secondly, that before that event, the Son who is 'the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person' had no relation to man and no dealings with man; hence thirdly, that he is not in the Old Testament economy; and fourthly, that to see him in the flesh, with the bodily eye, was enough to insure a real and saving knowledge of him. Such ghosts are raised out of one imaginary text, '*Christ took flesh,*' and one real one, '*God manifest in the flesh.*' For calming weak minds, it may be enough to say that those who represent the incarnation of the Son of God as the manifestation of God in the flesh, always strenuously assert these two things: On the one hand, whatever knowledge of God man has had from the beginning has been through the Son, the Word, the Image of

the Father, who has ever been in the world,—the light, and the life of men; on the other hand, no manifestation of Christ, or of God in Christ, from without,—whether it be in his personal presence or in the preaching of his gospel,—can give a real knowledge of him without the inward illumination of the Holy Spirit. That, however, is no reason why we should confound or identify what Christ reveals to us, what is revealed to us in Christ, or by and through Christ, before his incarnation and since, with the light in every man, Christ in every man. It is a mere artifice of controversy to represent any party as holding, that to have seen Christ in the flesh with the bodily eye was equivalent to really knowing him. And it is a strange one-sided explanation of the difficulty which the author conjures up, when he makes the Incarnation, which, at the beginning of the Essay, was the only means of our knowing God as we need and crave to know him, nothing more after all than the exhibition or realization, for once, in a perfect man, of what every man may find in himself;—and to all appearance might equally well have found, if there had been no promise of the woman's Seed at the first, and no fulfilment of the promise in the fulness of the time.

Of course, the author does not abandon his first proposition. On the contrary, after again appealing to "the method of St John," in the preface to his Gospel, as "far more scientific, and also far more human and practical," than what he has been denouncing, he fixes



the Unitarian in a kind of dilemma. Either own the Son, as he appeared on earth, to be ‘of one substance with the Father,’ or else you will assuredly, however you may talk about “omnipotence or omnipresence,” “honour the Son, not *as* you honour the Father, but *above* him.” (Pp. 120–122.) You cannot help it; for what you see of God in Christ approves itself to you as more godlike than any vague and abstract notions you can form of Deity apart from Christ. This is a view which surely admits of, if it does not require, a separation of two things which the author is always blending into one; the light to men and the light in men. The Son of God, as the Word, has ever been the revealer of the Father. He reveals him fully as the Word made flesh. He reveals him, however, to men, not in men. It is the special office of the Spirit, who has ever since the Fall been moving on the face of the chaotic human waters, to ‘take of what is Christ’s and shew it unto us;’ to ‘shine into our hearts and give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’

After a brief and emphatic appeal to “the younger Unitarian,” in connexion with his second proposition,—enforcing the practical importance of what he has said about “Christ entering into our temptations,” (p. 122, 123,)—the author proposes “to indulge in a mere *argumentum ad hominem*,” by which he hopes “to make much of his third proposition in discoursing with a Unitarian.”



He appeals to Unitarians as “pledged, along with Arminian churchmen, to hostility against the Calvinistical theory of election.” They both “have complained of the Calvinist, partly for his exclusions, partly for his zeal in proclaiming the will of God as the sole cause of redemption and salvation.” He proposes to “repudiate” the exclusions and to adopt the proclamation. What Calvinism proclaims is “as much presumed in the doctrine that God redeems mankind, as in the doctrine that he redeems certain elect souls,”—he means persons,—“out of mankind.” Does the author not see that this is a mere evasion? Apart altogether from the doctrine of election,—the question is, What is the cause of one man believing and being saved, while another man refuses to believe and is condemned? Is it his own will? Or is it the will of God putting forth divine power to move the will of the man? Nor will it avail to distort and caricature the opinions of “those who consider themselves very moderate Calvinists,” and to speak of “those favourite divisions of theirs which seem to make the ‘believer’ something different from a man, and so to take from him the very truth which he has to believe.” (Pp. 123–125.) Is the author jesting? If I believe a truth in science which another man rejects,—does that make me different from a man, or take from me the very truth I have to believe? If I believe the author when he offers me a boon, and accordingly take the boon,—does that make

me something different from a man? But this is trifling. The main point is, that, according to the author, it will not do "to denounce the exclusiveness of Calvinists," unless "Anglicans give up their exclusiveness, and Unitarians of all schools give up their several exclusivenesses," and "we heartily and unfeignedly acknowledge that Christ, the Son of God, has taken the nature of every man. With that faith, when it has possessed our whole being, exclusiveness of any kind cannot dwell." (Pp. 123-125.)

Now if this sentence means merely that Christ, the Son of God, has taken the nature common to all men,—or in other words, that real human nature which every man has,—it is true; but it is not to the author's purpose: for it does not shut out the exclusivenesses which he repudiates, nor any one of them. If it is to do that which the author desires, it must be because it means something else than this, or something more. Does it mean that Christ, the Son of God, has taken the nature of every man, in the sense of his being the same to every man,—and continuing always the same to every man,—whether he believes or not? If believing or not believing makes any difference whatever between men, with reference to Christ, the Son of God in human nature,—or if any other thing makes a difference,—if recognising or not recognising the light within does so,—then what becomes of the doctrine that the Incarnation is a safeguard against all exclusiveness? It can be so,

only if it is understood as *ipso facto*,—or *ex opere operato*,—making Christ and every man one ; making them one—beyond the power either of the human will, or the divine to cause any difference in that respect between man and man ;—unless indeed it come to this, that Christ is every man and every man is Christ.

The author hints, in closing, that his view of the Incarnation may have the effect of banishing “all the dark and horrible thoughts respecting our Father in heaven, and our fellow-creatures on earth, which exist among us, and which we have adopted from heathenism.” (P. 126.) What these are, will probably appear in the sequel. In the meantime, he suggests the inquiry, “whether the belief that Jesus Christ set forth in the gospels as the express image of God, and the image after which man is formed, has not been the secret of all that is confessedly high, pure, moral in our convictions.” Even here, should it not be “the image after which man was formed?” At all events, with the author’s theology, as already unfolded before us,—with the prospect also of finding that the theology with which he contrasts his own is “at the root of all that is cruel in our doctrine, as well as of that which is most feeble and base in our practice,”—it is necessary to hesitate. These concluding words of this Essay form a somewhat ominous prelude to the consideration of the doctrine of the Atonement.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE REMEDY PROVIDED—THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE REDEEMER.

#### ESSAY VII.—ON THE ATONEMENT.

THE author disclaims “the so-called theology of consciousness.” He does so, however, with three qualifications. He “is anxious to observe all the experiences and consciousnesses which the history of the world bears witness of.” He desires that “all these should be understood, as they can only be understood, through the conscience of each man.” And he “asks of theology that it should explain these consciousnesses, and clear and satisfy that individual conscience.” There are, then, general consciousnesses “which the history of the world bears witness of.” And there is an “individual conscience,”—“the conscience of each man.” Theology must explain the consciousness; and it must also clear and satisfy the conscience. But it seems, “a theology which is based upon consciousness, which is derived out of it, cannot fulfil these conditions.” It cannot harmonise the consciousnesses and the conscience;—the con-

sciousnesses witnessed by history, and the individual conscience of each man ;—as that conscience has been carried through sin, suffering, righteousness, a Redeemer, a Son of God, an incarnation,—in the previous Essays. (Pp. 127, 128.)

Four of the consciousnesses are specified : the consciousness of sin ;” “the consciousness of a tyrant and oppressor ;” “the consciousness of an advocate ;” “the consciousness that we share our sin with our fellow-creatures, and that we are obnoxious to a punishment which belongs equally to them.” (Pp. 128, 129.) This last consciousness ought to be equivalent to a consciousness of common guilt, and a common liability to retribution, on the part of each individual of the human race, owning a common character with all the rest.

These four consciousnesses originate four theologies, or theological tendencies. The first,—the consciousness of sin,—suggests “a consciousness of consequences flowing from sin,—stretching into the furthest future.” It raises the question, “Who shall sever the consequences from the cause?” It “suggests the thought that pain, suffering, misery, are especially the Creator’s work ;”—he having linked the one to the other ;—that they are therefore “the signs which denote his feelings towards his creatures.” The second, the consciousness of a tyrant and oppressor, “leads to the supposition that he,” the Creator, “is that tyrant and oppressor.” The third, the consciousness of an advocate, “leads to the supposi-

tion that the advocate may be the instrument of delivering us out of the hand of the Creator, of saving us from the punishment which the Creator has appointed for transgression." While the fourth "leads to the reflection, how can we put ourselves into a different position from" that of our fellow-creatures? "how can we escape from the calamities with which God has threatened them?" (Pp. 128, 129.) How can we escape from the calamities with which God has threatened us?—would seem to be the more natural way of putting the question. But it serves a purpose to put it otherwise.

"In each of these cases," the author adds, "a notion or maxim respecting theology is likely to be generalised from the *consciousness*, which will oppose and outrage the *conscience*." And he "wishes the reader to observe" this. (P. 129.)

It may well be observed: for is it not somewhat strange? That there should be consciousnesses,—original instincts of our being,—moral and spiritual senses,—from each of which "a notion or maxim is likely to be generalised" different from that which may be generalised from any of the others;—and that all of these notions or maxims should "oppose and outrage conscience;" this is surely a startling view of human nature. No doubt it might be expected, if human nature is corrupt and man has fallen,—that man's best instincts or consciousnesses might be so perverted as to breed monsters from which the conscience must revolt; such

monsters as the author brings together in fourfold array, to guard the threshold of his theory of the Atonement. But it will not do to marshal these products of the alleged consciousnesses of mankind before the conscience, and sue for an indiscriminate sentence against them. Let the products, in the meantime, be dismissed out of court. Let the conscience be asked to deal with the consciousnesses themselves, as ascertained to be genuine ; all perversions of them, or of their products, being set aside. And let an estimate be made as to the fair value of each apart, and of all together.

The author institutes no such process. He does not pause to distinguish the precious from the vile, either in the consciousnesses themselves, or in the notions or maxims generalised from them. And yet his own summary,—his own analysis as now given,—may suggest a ground or basis for the doctrine of the Atonement which he himself altogether evades.

Let these four facts in my experience be admitted to be real:—I feel that I do wrong and am wrong ; I feel that I am under bondage, and am not my own master, —not master of myself ; I feel that I should be delivered or emancipated,—that I ought to be, and somehow must be, different from what I am ; I feel that there lies upon me, in common with all men, guilt, criminality, condemnation, liability to punishment. Now take these feelings,—or these facts,—as fairly representing my consciousness and that of every man. Take them in



their true and full meaning. I am a wrong doer, a wrong thinker. I am in bondage to an evil spirit. I have that within me which demands a deliverer. And I have also that within me which tells me that, in common with all men, I am "obnoxious to punishment." In plain terms, I have not only consciousnesses, but a conscience; for the consciousnesses coalesce in a conscience; which, however, speaks more to the point, and more 'as one having authority,' than they can do. My conscience testifies that I am obnoxious to punishment. And my conscience also testifies that unless the deliverer is one who can deal with that feature of my case;—who can meet and dispose of,—not the punishment to which I am obnoxious,—but my consciousness of being obnoxious to punishment;—he cannot rescue me from my subjection to the tyranny of the evil spirit;—he cannot make me a right doer,—a right thinker;—in a word, he cannot make me a righteous and holy being.

I cannot get out of this vice in which my consciousnesses, as authenticated by my conscience, hold me fast. I may be told that if I dwell exclusively on my consciousness of sin, in connexion with its inevitable and inseparable consequence, suffering,—I may come to regard the suffering, if not also the sin, as an index of the Creator's feelings towards his creatures;—perhaps even to cast the responsibility of both upon him;—and so to originate a theology of fatalism, or something worse. I may be told that "the consciousness of a tyrant and

oppressor may lead to the supposition that he," the Creator, "is that tyrant and oppressor;"—which is the theology of Devil-worship. I may be told further of the temptation besetting me to look for an Advocate who shall "deliver me out of the hand of the Creator," and in that way "save me from the punishment" which he has appointed;—a notion lying at the root of the theology of superstition. And to crown all, I may be told that because I feel this punishment to belong equally to me and to my fellow-creatures, I will be moved by that feeling to originate a theology of selfishness, and to ask how I may escape "from the calamities with which God has threatened them;"—as if I were not one of them,—in the same condemnation with the very worst of them. But neither this last selfish theology,—nor the superstitious,—nor the Satanic,—nor that of fatalism,—fairly represents any one of these consciousnesses apart;—far less the whole of them compactly joined together. Under the dark pressure of all the four, I go straight up to my conscience. I ask of that oracle what all this means. And the answer I get is, that I am an intelligent being who has sinned;—that I am a criminal,—guilty,—ill-deserving,—incapable of deserving better; that I am under a just sentence,—condemned as the violator of an unalterable Moral Law.

True, I feel, most true. Now I have reached the ultimate explanation—the primary cause—of my nature's unnatural strife. Tell me how this consciousness is to

be met,—how my craving for relief from my guilt and corruption is to be satisfied,—how I am to get rid of the feeling that I am a depraved and condemned man,—helplessly depraved, and righteously condemned. Tell me that, I say. For until you tell me that, you need not speak to me of escape from punishment,—or of an Advocate to plead for me,—or of an evil spirit overcome,—or even of sin yielding to an inward sense of righteousness, and pain to an inward resentment of wrong,—of a “strong Son of God” waging the very war which I have to wage, and a man like myself, yet perfect in the image of God. Most precious is all such assurance of my oneness with my Saviour and of his sympathy with me. But shew me first, I repeat, how I may be just with God, and how God may be just with me,—how he may be pure in receiving me, and I may be pure in returning to him. Then I will listen thankfully to what you have to shew me of these other things. Give me back my sense of guiltlessness and guilelessness,—or else you do not make me the man I was before I broke the law of my God; the man I feel I would have been if I had not broken the law of my God, and had not been hardened in the breaking of it.

This is the consciousness, or conscience,—call it what you will,—in which the root of the doctrine of the Atonement is to be found; and no man adequately discusses that doctrine unless he recognises this feeling far more unequivocally and explicitly than the author does. It

is real. And so far from its being relieved by any mere discovery of the absolute love of God,—his love to us,—or by any advances which he may make to us through his Son becoming one of us, one with us,—it grows deeper and darker,—more intense than ever. Shew me that God does not hate, but loves his sinful creatures,—and me among the rest,—the most sinful of them all. Shew me that he desires and deserves to be loved and trusted, not suspected and feared. Shew me any amount whatever of grace and condescension by which he seeks to win our confidence and destroy our tyrant, and make our nature like his own. The more you shew me all this,—the more,—if I have a spark of generous feeling in my bosom,—the more do you stir up in me,—in my inmost heart and soul,—an intolerance of the thought that I am guilty in the judgment of such a God,—guilty of violating his holy and good law. And I cannot rest until I see how that guiltiness in me is to be righteously got rid of. I cannot otherwise have that self-respect, without which I cannot respect Him.

It is a libel on the common doctrine of the Atonement,—not that this author knowingly utters it, for apparently he does not know the doctrine itself,—but it is nevertheless a foul libel on that doctrine, to say that it merely meets the vulgar dread of punishment,—the fear of hell,—which is ‘the hangman’s whip, to keep the wretch in order.’ That is met far more easily and successfully every day by the thousand presumptions of impunity

and pleas for mercy in which men take comfortable refuge. It will be met more easily also by the doctrine which resolves the whole character and government of God into charity. What the Atonement really meets is a far higher, holier, deeper feeling in our moral nature ;—a feeling which, though too nearly dead in most men, yet speaks more or less in all ;—a feeling which, the more God is known to be love, and the more there is of ‘truth in the inward parts,’ only grows the more intense ;—the feeling of blame-worthiness,—the sense of being justly condemned. The best theologies, overlooking this consciousness so much as the author’s theology does, may refine and elevate the thoughtful mind. But it may be doubted if they can make the heart right with God,—as a child’s heart is made right with his father, when his offence is not connived at, but dealt with and disposed of. And it must be deliberately said, that disowning,—or at least not owning,—what is perhaps the truest and best instinct of fallen man struggling to be free,—these theologies want the substance and body which alone can render any belief that stirs the conscience enduring,—and must soon therefore give place, either to the reveries of the mystics, or to the far lower but more practical discipline of a cold and superficial utilitarian morality.

These remarks partly anticipate, although they do not exhaust, the matters of discussion suggested by the

remainder of this Essay ; and therefore the review of it may be less minute than it might otherwise have been.

Having found that from each "*consciousness*," as described by him, "a notion or maxim respecting theology is likely to be generalised which will oppose and outrage the *conscience*,"—the author represents a man proceeding naturally on these "data," as "of necessity working out a system, on which he afterwards gazes with terror, from which he longs to break loose, which he charges priests and doctors with having created." No, the author replies, they did not quite create it. But they endorsed, and systematised, and embodied in rules and practice, the false, loose, morbid conceptions and cravings of the diseased heart ; and sanctified as "faith, that which is grounded, in great part, upon fear and distrust." For this they are to be blamed, especially the Christian portion of them. "They have had an intuition of a higher truth," "which alone gave substance to the opinions with which they and their disciples disfigured it." "The priests of Christendom," in particular, "have a theology revealed from heaven, which perfectly satisfies the demands of the human heart ;" which, among other recommendations of it, "presents such a God as the conscience witnesses there must be and is, not such a one as the understanding tries to shape out from its own reflections on the testimony of conscience." (P. 130.)



There is, of course, a meaning in this contrast between the conscience witnessing directly, and the conscience witnessing through the understanding. The “priests of Christendom” are represented as taking the idea of God on which they rest their theory of the Atonement, not immediately from what the conscience itself testifies, but as it were at second hand, from what the understanding manufactures out of its testimony. There is an impertinent interference of the understanding, professedly to interpret, but really to pervert, the evidence of the conscience. Why this jealousy of that humble functionary,—the understanding? If a question arises as to the real import of what the conscience witnesses in any matter, how is it to be settled without some use of the understanding? The author thinks that a being of mere absolute love is such a God as the conscience witnesses that there is and must be. I may happen to be of opinion that this is not what conscience testifies at all, when it is questioned fairly, not through any medium, but directly,—that on the contrary it testifies of law and government, of guilt and judgment, of sin and death,—that only a holy and righteous Ruler, dealing judicially with his responsible creatures, can be such a God as the conscience witnesses that there is and must be. I may be quite willing to submit the case between us to the arbitration of the understanding. But the author objects, and I am silenced. All I can do is to protest that I shall not be held as confessing that the



deposition of the witness, according to my reading of it, is in the least degree more inferential and constructive than the author's own statement of its import. And perhaps I may be allowed, as I retire from court, to suggest that this manifest distrust or dislike of the understanding, taken in connexion with a certain eagerness already noticed to "get rid of texts and narratives," affords an additional reason for receiving with considerable caution what the author may have to say, either on the subject of "an intuition of a higher truth," or on the subject of "a theology revealed from heaven."

Having conjured up for the bewildered student or victim of "consciousnesses" and "conscience" a system on which he "gazes with horror;—and having duly stigmatised "the priests of Christendom" as largely responsible for the system, and the most criminal of all its abettors;—the author now "reaches the subject which is the test of all that he has been saying hitherto." He finds in the teaching of "the priests of Christendom," an ample apology at least, if not a justification, for "those who cry for a theology based upon consciousness, which shall supersede the theology of Christendom." These parties protest that "the doctrines respecting sacrifice and atonement which prevail in Christendom, among Protestants as well as Romanists," are "doomed," "dead;" that neither "texts of Scripture" can keep them unburied on the plain, nor "the verdict of centuries" galvanise them into artificial life; that they

exist merely by the weight of authority, civil and ecclesiastical, and the prejudice of "a certain public opinion;" that they darken the sense of right and wrong, bewilder the understanding, sanction the most false conceptions respecting sin, the most cruel conceptions respecting God;" that "the conscience of human beings is in revolt against them." (Pp. 129-131.) Such is their cry, such is their protest; with which the author now proceeds to deal, with a view to make out that the theology based on consciousness for which they cry, instead of being the fitting cure, is the real cause of the evil against which they protest.

He admits that these notions may be imputed to Romanists and Protestants. With a vast show of candour, he confesses a want of courage on the part of himself and others "in saying whether they regard these as parts of their creed or not." He holds "that they are not parts of God's revelation, or of the old creeds, but belong to that theology of consciousness which modern enlightenment would substitute for the theology of the Bible and of the Church; that their rise may be distinctly and historically traced to this source," and "that Christian theology, as expressed in the language of the Bible and of the Church, construed most simply, is a deliverance from these oppressive notions, and is the only one which has yet been or ever will be found." (Pp. 132, 133.)

He proceeds to trace the notions in question historically

to their source in the theology of consciousness. Of course he means the theology of consciousness as he has given an analysis of it in the beginning of the Essay.

1. He traces the usual account of the "growth of the Romish system." "Men who were stung with the recollection of evil acts, thought they might do something to win the favour or avert the wrath of the Divine Being." Hence the conviction that they must make sacrifices, the greater the better, that their sins may be forgiven. They consult the priests. They accept indulgences and penances. They apply to popular confessors,—the saints,—the Virgin Mother to intercede with the Divine Son, that his infinite sacrifice might remove post-baptismal sins. (Pp. 133, 134.)

2. He sketches the experience of Luther and the manner of his deliverance. The sketch is very brief. What Luther believed respecting the Atonement, on the authority of the Bible, is given as simply this, "that the Son of God had taken away sin." His "conscience did not make a system. It protested against one which had been made in compliance with apparent necessities of the conscience. It said that the real necessity of the conscience was, that God should speak to it, declare himself to it,—should proclaim himself as its Reconciler, should shew how and in whom he had accomplished that work on its behalf." (P. 136.) It is not necessary at present to ask what this means—or how far it does justice to Luther's glorying in the cross of Christ.

3. The material point comes now. The author says, "I admitted that there were grave and earnest doubts against much of what is called *our* doctrine of the Atonement." These doubts are thus expressed by the objector, who is represented dramatically as expostulating with "*us*."

(1.) As to what "*our*" doctrine is; "you hold that God had condemned all his creatures to perish, because they had broken his law; that his justice could not be satisfied without an infinite punishment; that that infinite punishment would have visited all men, if Christ in his mercy to men had not interposed and offered himself as the substitute for them; that by enduring an inconceivable amount of anguish, he reconciled the Father, and made it possible for him to forgive those who would believe." (P. 137.)

Is this the "*our* doctrine" against much of which there are "grave and earnest protests?" One would think there might well be protests against the whole of it. But does the author really accept the objector's representation of it? Then, excepting only that words are used answering to "condemnation," "satisfaction," "substitution," "reconciliation,"—he ought to know that the entire statement is a perversion. But not to insist on this at present, let the objector proceed.

(2.) As to the basis of "*our*" doctrine; "It is based on a certain notion of justice," which, however, "outrages the conscience to which you seem to offer your

explanation." (P. 137.) "You admit that it is not the kind of justice which would be expected of men." "We can forgive a fellow-creature a wrong done to us without exacting an equivalent for it: we blame ourselves if we do not." "We do not feel that punishment is a satisfaction to our minds; we are ashamed of ourselves when we consider it is. We may suffer a criminal to be punished, but it is that we may do him good, or assert a principle. And if that is our object, we do not suffer an innocent person to prevent the guilty from enduring the consequences of his guilt, by taking them upon himself." (P. 138.)

It might be asked here, What is meant by our suffering a criminal to be punished "that we may assert a principle?"—what principle?—a principle of government?—human or divine?—or both? But to pass on.

(3.) It seems that "clergymen are exceedingly anxious to stifle these questions," although they "are asked on all sides of us." They fear that "such doubts" respecting "some views of the Atonement" may lead to a denial of "the doctrine itself,"—to a denial of "the Bible itself." They will not rob "the humble penitent" who "on a dying bed" "clings to the cross of Christ as her dearest hope, and feels that without his sacrifice and death she can have no hope." (Pp. 138, 139.)

Neither will the author. "Debates are going on—misery, alienation of hearts arises from them." "The divine and the moralist" must be brought into agree-

ment. But by no means must those who, according to "the statement of the clergymen," which "is certainly not exaggerated," are "the best, the humblest, truest hearts," be robbed of their peace and hope. They "rest with most childlike faith upon the belief that '*God has reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;*' that the death of Christ is the death of that '*Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.*'" It may be impertinent to ask a repudiator of "texts and narratives" where he finds the passages which he professes to quote from Scripture. Both of them are altered from the usual reading. The alteration in the last is not important, although the "sin" of the world is not necessarily identical with its "sins," and may be held to indicate the root and origin, rather than the manifestations of its evil; condemnation and corruption, as giving birth to actual offences. In regard to the first, if the author as a theologian were amenable at all to scholarship, he might not merely be asked to justify his translation, '*God has reconciled,*' as preferable to the authorised version, '*God was in Christ reconciling,*'—but he might be challenged to produce a single text of Scripture, or a single fair inference from any number of texts of Scripture, in support of the opinion that '*God has reconciled the world unto himself.*' It is more to the point, however, to ask if the author really meets the case of the true and humble hearts with whom he sympathises, when he puts the question,—“What is



it to assure them that transgressions are forgiven by a bare act of amnesty, unless the sin of the heart and will, the separation from God, which is the root of these transgressions, is at an end?" Who are they who teach "that transgressions are forgiven by a bare act of amnesty?" Not those who hold and preach the doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice. If the author admitted into his creed, in any definite form, the article of the forgiveness of transgressions, he himself might be said to proclaim "a bare act of amnesty." If he does not, it is because in his theology the whole question of the forgiveness of sin is set aside, or superseded. No man of really childlike faith can easily acquiesce in such a procedure. A man of that stamp will admit and deeply feel that "a bare act of amnesty" cannot meet his case. His "separation from God"—"the sin of the heart and will"—must come "to an end." "God himself" must "remove it." And he must do so by "some one in whom we are bound more closely to him than our evils have put us asunder." But that "some one," if the poor are not to be spoiled of their birthright, must be a real 'Lamb of God;'—he must be an actual High-priest, having an atoning sacrifice to present for them, and entitled in their name, and on their behalf, to negotiate for them a covenant of pardon and peace, in the most holy place, within the veil.

The author, however, has another idea of the Atonement. Those who "rest with childlike faith" on what



the Bible says of reconciliation and the Lamb of God are not to be told "that no atonement has been made between man and God." "The gospel sets forth the Mediator, in whom we are at one with the Father." "It shews him, who is one with God and one with man, perfectly giving up that self-will which had been the cause of all men's crimes and all their misery." (P. 110.) Is this the old quibble about At-one-ment?

Here is Christ, in whom we are bound more closely to God than our evils have put us asunder;—in whom we are at one with the Father;—who, being one with God and one with man, perfectly gives up that self-will which has been man's crime and ruin. This must mean, that he is not self-willed, like other men. It can mean nothing more. But is there any sacrifice here? Is there any giving up of anything unless it be a giving up of sin? In a loose sense, it may be said of a selfish man, when he becomes generous or godly, that he gives up that self-will which has been his great fault,—his curse,—and that in doing so, he makes a sacrifice. In what sense can this be said of Christ?

But the author can go very far in the use of current phrases. He can "affirm that the cross exhibits the wrath of God against sin, and the endurance of that wrath by the well-beloved Son;"—and he can do so because "nowhere is the contrast between infinite love and infinite evil brought before us as it is there." "Wrath against that which is unlovely is not the

counteracting force to love, but the attribute of it. Without it, love must be a name, and not a reality. And the endurance of that wrath or punishment by Christ, came from his acknowledging that it proceeded from love, and his willingness that it should not be quenched till it had effected its loving purpose. The endurance of that wrath was the proof that he bore in the truest and strictest sense the sins of the world, feeling them with that anguish with which only a perfectly pure and holy being, who is also a perfectly sympathising and gracious being, can feel the sins of others." (P. 141.)

How does Christ on the cross feel the sins of others? Does he feel them as I might feel them? I am not perfectly pure and holy; I am not perfectly sympathising and gracious. But comparatively I may be so. In pure and gracious love, I cast myself into the midst of a people sunk in crime and misery. I pity them and would rescue them. With this view, I dwell among them; I make myself one with them; I suffer with them and for them. Plainly the wrath of heaven is upon them,—that wrath against the unlovely which is the attribute of Love itself. This wrath is exhibited in what they suffer. It is exhibited in what I suffer. My endurance of it is exhibited while I continue among them, and am willing to brave death rather than abandon them. All the while, I feel their pollutions, I feel their sins, as they do not feel them themselves. And the

purser I am, and the more loving, the more do I feel them. I endure the wrath of God, acknowledging that it proceeds from love, and should not be quenched until it has accomplished its loving purpose. I bear the sins of these men, feeling them with an anguish proportioned to my own personal purity. Living and dying among them, entering into their miserable state, over which the cloud of Heaven's wrath darkly hangs, I suffer with their sin and for it.

Is there an atonement here? Is there a sacrifice of propitiation? Is there anything more than sympathy?—sympathy with God in his wrath against that which is unlovely—sympathy with my poor brethren whose sufferings I share, whose sins I feel?

But substitution, not sympathy, is the essence of an atonement. It is a judicial transaction; if it is not so, it is no reality, but a mere name. And the cross of Christ is not really different from the cross of Peter, or that of any other pure and loving benefactor of his race. There may be a difference of degree in the endurance of wrath and the feeling of sin, according to the measure of sensibility to the divine love and to human evil. But as to the essential nature and character of the procedure, there is none.

Having traced the rise of the notions which have corrupted the doctrine of the Atonement, and having indicated his own idea of it, the author undertakes "to shew that the orthodox faith, as it is expressed in the Bible and the

creeds, absolutely prevents us from acquiescing in some of those explanations of the Atonement which both in popular and scholastic teachings have been identified with it." The following are his propositions or heads, stated by him with more than ordinary formality.

1. and 2. The will of God originates all good, and, in particular, the mission of Christ. The Father sendeth the Son. And the Son is one in will with the Father. "On earth his whole life was nothing else than an exhibition of this will, an entire submission to it." Therefore "we must not dare to speak of Christ as changing that will which he took flesh and died to fulfil." (Pp. 143, 144.)

3. "Christ is the Lord of men"—"the root of righteousness in each man," "made known as such by his incarnation. If we speak of Christ as taking upon himself the sins of men by some artificial substitution, we deny that he is their actual representative." (P. 144.)

4. Founding on Hebrews ii. 14, the author says of "all orthodox schools," and "tens of thousands of suffering people,"—"instead of seeking to put Christ at a distance from themselves, by tasking their fancy to conceive of sufferings which at the same moment are pronounced inconceivable, they have claimed him as entering into their actual miseries, as bearing their griefs." "They have believed that he rescued them out of the power of an enemy by yielding to his power,

not that he rescued them out of the hand of God by paying a penalty to him." (P. 145.)

5. "The Scripture says, '*The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world.*' All orthodox teachers repeat the lesson." "Have we right to call ourselves scriptural or orthodox, if we change the words, and put 'penalty of sin' for 'sin;' if we suppose that Christ destroyed the connexion between sin and death,—the one being the necessary wages of the other,—for the sake of benefiting any individual man whatever? If he had, would he have magnified the law and made it honourable? Would he not have destroyed that which he came to fulfil? Those who say the law must execute itself, must have its penalty, should remember their words. How does it execute itself if a person, against whom it is not directed, interposes to bear its punishment?" (P. 146.)

6. "A perfectly holy and loving Being can be satisfied only with a holiness and love corresponding to his own." "Christ satisfied the Father by presenting the image of his own holiness and love," especially in "his sacrifice and death." "How, then, can we tolerate for an instant that notion of God which would represent him as satisfied by the punishment of sin, not by the purity and graciousness of the Son?" (P. 147.)

7. Summing up the whole, the author gives again his view of the Atonement. "The Father's will is a will to all good." "The Son obeys and fulfils, in our flesh,

that will, by entering into the lowest condition into which men had fallen through their sin." Therefore "he is an object of continual complacency to his Father, and that complacency is fully drawn out by the death of the cross." "His death is a sacrifice, the only complete sacrifice ever offered, the entire surrender of the whole spirit and body to God." "This, in the highest sense, is atonement." "The true, sinless root of humanity is revealed; God in him is reconciled to man. The cross is the meeting point between man and man, between man and God." "In it all the wisdom and truth and glory of God were manifested to the creature; in it man is presented as a holy and acceptable sacrifice to God." (Pp. 147, 148.)

There is nothing new in these objections against the doctrine of a vicarious or expiatory sacrifice. They have been urged by Unitarians, and fully answered, times without number. The novelty is to find them in a defence of the doctrine of the Atonement. And the surpassing wonder is to see an English theologian, at this hour, so thoroughly ignorant of what really is the doctrine of "Archbishop Magee" and those who hold in substance his views,—and at the same time so dogmatic in claiming for himself the authority of the Bible and the creeds, without once glancing at the texts or at the Articles which directly bear upon the question at issue. (P. 148.)

Let the case be fairly stated for the defenders of the current evangelical belief.



We do not hold that Christ in any sense changed the will of the Father. We do not hold that the Atonement moved the Father to love the world, but that the Father so loved the world as to provide the Atonement. We do not admit the substitution of Christ in the room of the guilty to be artificial. We believe it to be real and actual. We believe it to be the gracious appointment of the sovereign will of God. And we believe that because Christ is the actual representative of men, he is on that very account qualified to be their substitute. We do not put Christ's endurance of inconceivable sufferings as our substitute instead of his entering into our actual miseries and bearing our griefs. We believe both. We believe in the sympathy of Christ with us, as well as in the substitution of Christ for us: and we believe the sympathy to be all the more tender and true on account of the substitution. We do not believe that he rescued men out of the hand of God, by paying a penalty to him: but as little do we believe that he rescued them out of the power of an enemy, by yielding to his power. We believe that he did not yield to the enemy's power, but triumphed over it. He yielded to death, not because the enemy had any power over him, but because the Father gave him the cup to drink. We do not put 'penalty for sin' instead of 'sin' in the passage about the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world. But we ask what persons accustomed to the sacrificial language and ideas of the Old Testament would under-



stand by that phrase. And we ask what that other passage means,—‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.’ We do not suppose that Christ has destroyed the connexion between sin and death. We hold that he has ratified and confirmed it more emphatically than if all sinners perished. The Holy One, taking the responsibility,—the guilt,—of our sin upon himself, accepted the wages of sin, which is death. We do not say that the law must execute itself. The Lawgiver must execute his own law ; and it is for him to judge if in any instance a substitute may stand for the guilty. We do not represent God as satisfied by the punishment of sin. We speak, indeed, of the justice of God, or his holy law, being satisfied,—its claims being met,—its violated majesty being vindicated,—when sin is punished. But this is a very different thing from representing God as feeling a personal satisfaction in punishing sin ; which is clearly what the author means to ascribe to us. We hold strongly, that God can be satisfied only when he beholds his own image in man, as he did at first, and in Christ Jesus does again. We believe, finally, that the death of Christ is a sacrifice, both because it is the entire surrender of the whole spirit and body to God, and also because this surrender implied that ‘he bore our sins in his own person on the cross.’ We believe that it is not a sacrifice of man to God, but a sacrifice for man ;—the sacrifice, the vicarious and expiatory suffering of the

representative of man, the substitute for man,—the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all,—who gave his life a ransom for the many.

It moves one's deepest sorrow to see a man like this author trying to gain his case by mere abuse of the opposite counsel. Let it be granted that in popular statements of the doctrine of the Atonement unguarded expressions may be found. Surely one so learned and so charitable ought to know that he is really fighting against a wooden Soldan,—a mere man of straw,—and that he is offensively caricaturing a belief which to very many poor afflicted ones is the very life of their souls. Is he not aware that the true and only idea he has to deal with is the idea of substitution? Let him expunge that idea,—not loose declamation about it,—not ignorant perversions of it,—but the idea itself,—out of the Bible, out of the creeds. Let him expunge it out of the great conscience of mankind. Then his cause is won.

This, however, is not so easy a task as the other. Is there such an attribute as justice in the character of God?—not justice of a different kind from what we call justice among men, but the very same—the justice which would force me, however willing to “forgive a wrong done to me without exacting an equivalent for it,” (p. 137,)—yet as a judge to count the criminal guilty, and enforce the sentence of the law? That is the fair analogy; imperfect no doubt, but fair. The author must surely know that, and he should have said

it. If he denies that God judges and condemns us,—that we are actually guilty and condemned,—he raises another question. Of course, in that case, there is no need of any judicial procedure, any infliction of punishment, either upon men themselves, or upon a surety in their stead. But the doctrine of substitution, as held by its advocates, proceeds upon the assumption that there is guilt, criminality, blameworthiness, attaching to all men, and that the Judge of all deals with it judicially, in terms of his own law. Disprove the assumption, and the doctrine falls. But in all fairness, discuss the principle of the doctrine, upon the assumption. Here, then, are we all, summoned before the Judge,—compelled to plead guilty,—condemned,—sentenced. What now is the Judge, the Lawgiver, to do? Does he divest himself of the judicial character? The unsophisticated conscience of mankind answers—No, he cannot. My conscience,—the more I know and believe that he is love, answers the more emphatically,—No, he cannot. Were he to forgive me without executing the judicial sentence which, the more I see that he loves me the more I feel that my deep guilt deserves,—I could not forgive myself. I feel as if almost I would be compelled myself to execute it. And he tells me that this feeling is right. But he tells me this, when he presents to me one,—his only-begotten Son,—whom in infinite love he sends,—who in infinite love comes,—to take my place. He is infinitely worthy;

and the more I gaze on him, obeying, suffering, dying, as the substitute of sinners of whom I am chief, the more do I admire the glorious harmony of righteousness and love which the gracious arrangement unfolds. I lay the burden of my conscious guilt on him. And now, with conscience cleansed and heart won over,—my own sense of justice being satisfied, as well the claims of that justice of God which I deeply feel must be met,—I return to my Father and have peace.

This is that instinct in men, recognising justice in God and guilt in sin, which, more or less distinctly realized, has made them always welcome,—whenever conscience awakes within them,—the shedding of blood for the remission of sins. This is the true doctrine of the Atonement,—holding which, I can go to all my fellows as confidently as the author, and say—“my theology rests on the eternal love, which overlooks all distinctions, which embraces all the world,” (p. 150;) for ‘it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.’

## CHAPTER V.

THE REMEDY PROVIDED IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE  
REDEEMER—HIS WORK.

ESSAY VIII.—THE RESURRECTION OF THE SON OF GOD  
FROM DEATH, THE GRAVE, AND HELL.

DEATH, the Grave, Hell, the Resurrection,—these are the subjects of this Essay, suggested by the words of the creed, ‘he was dead and buried, he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead.’ They are twice passed in review. On the first review of them it is not necessary to dwell long.

1. On the subject of death, Strauss and the Apostle Paul are well contrasted. The last enemy to be destroyed, according to Paul, is death. According to Strauss, ‘it is the belief of a man in his own immortality.’ The desire to be rid of this belief is not so unnatural or unreasonable as might be supposed. So far the philosopher is right. But the thing is impossible. “The sense of immortality is very dreadful, but the terror is not one which the thought of death relieves us of; the thought of death awakens it in us,—the nearer we come to death, the more it faces us. Death, then, is *the* enemy.” The citizen of Tarsus carries it over the

German. To overcome the terror of the sense of immortality, we must grapple with death. We do grapple with it. We are convinced that its dark isolation and loneliness cannot and should not be submitted to. There is that in us which "rebels against death, all the more because it is a necessity." But Christ died. And therefore in death we are no longer solitary. Nor is death now to us a mere necessity. "Christ chose it because it is ours. We can choose it as his more than ours." (Pp. 153-159.)

There would seem to be little occasion here for discharging another poisoned arrow against the convenient lay-figure, set up in order to be knocked down, in the last Essay. By whom is the death of Christ represented as "an artificial arrangement for saving us from a future penalty, while the actual penalty which makes us tremble is incurred as much as ever?" (P. 158.) Whether the arrangement is artificial or not, depends upon the previous questions as to the reality of justice in God, and guilt in man. But at all events, those who have recourse to that arrangement believe that it enables them not only to escape a future penalty,—but to say now,—‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

2. "The feelings of men respecting death" are not

to be confounded "with those which are awakened by the grave." When one dies, we say of him—"he is gone." "The person whom we knew is not in the form which we look upon." But the form is sacred—"we cannot look at it and satisfy ourselves with any thoughts of a disembodied spirit." "In some way or other we must connect it with the friend" who is gone. At the same time, "the instinct to bury the dead out of our sight is also deep and healthy." "We call that which the earth incloses, that which it devours or assimilates to itself, 'remains,' or 'what is mortal;' we have a horror of identifying it with the actual body which was so precious to us." "The body associates itself with any thoughts we have of personality and immortality; that which lies in the earth, or is consumed with the fire, we naturally and inevitably associate with decay, putrefaction, destruction." (Pp. 159, 160.)

This is the germ of the author's theory of the Resurrection. In fact, it is the theory itself covertly introduced: for if his account of our feelings and instincts in burying our dead is accepted without qualification, it will go far to settle the question. It amounts to this,—that we expect nothing at all back from the grave in which we lay the body, or from the urn which incloses its ashes, or from the deep sea in which it has sunk with sullen plunge, or from the desert in which its bones have been left to bleach. But is it so?

It is admitted that it is "a true feeling, strongest in



truest minds," which prompts us to put the inanimate form of our best-beloved out of sight. "We shrink from the mummy," and cannot, even at superstition's bidding, "invest relics with the sacredness which we must attach to body." But is not this because that identical body is still precious to us? We cannot bear to see it lifeless. But fain would we see it living again. And it is because we long to see it living, that we hasten to put it, while dead, out of our sight. It is because we do identify what the earth receives with the actual body which was so precious to us, that we do not like to look at its decay. Neither is it correct to say, that "the body associates itself with any thoughts we have of personality and immortality." It is true that when we think of our departed brother, and try to picture him to our mind's eye such as we hope again to see him, we do not accurately distinguish between 'the dust which has returned to the earth as it was, and the spirit which has returned unto God who gave it.' He is before us, the entire man whose hand we used to grasp. But ask the mourner letting down the coffin into its narrow bed,—'Will your heart be satisfied when you meet him, unless this tomb shall have given him back something of what death has robbed him of?'—ask, and pause for his reply. He will tell you that all of his friend that lives elsewhere, will not be enough for him without what of his friend lies here. And he will tell you, moreover, that he finds consolation in the fact

that "*HE was buried*"—because it proves that what the earth receives, the earth cannot retain or hold for ever.

The manner of the resurrection will fall to be considered afterwards. In the meantime, it is submitted that this is at least as natural and intelligible an account of our feelings about the grave, and of the comfort to be derived from Christ's having been in the grave, as the explanation which the author gives. It is submitted also, that, ingenious and subtle as the author's explanation unquestionably is, it is not so true to the instincts of bereaved humanity.

3. "He descended into hell." "Mighty words! which I do not pretend that I can penetrate, or reduce under any forms of intellect. If I could, I think they would be of little worth to me." So the author exclaims; while at the same time he "accepts them as news that there is no corner of God's universe over which his love has not brooded;" and he claims from them a right to tell every man that "there is nothing created which his Lord and Master has not redeemed, of which he is not the king." These statements may perhaps mean less than they at first sight appear to mean; although it may be doubted whether the author would not resent the suggestion as an offence. There is nothing in the rest of the passage materially to modify them. He "will not quarrel with the etymology of Hades." Of course, he will not ask what it was understood to be the name of when the creed was made. To

him it represents a great idea. "The abyss of space into which Lord Byron brought Cain, Lucifer being his guide thither,"—is apparently "the true conception" of it. It is "a dark, formless world, in which there is nothing for the eye to dwell upon, for the heart to embrace, where all is vague and monstrous." It is "utter dreariness." "If we were merely children of earth, we might be satisfied with its pictures and images." "Being something better, we must make a hell for ourselves, if we cannot find a heaven. Yes, a hell: the simplest language is the best." "It may mean," the word Hades, "the unseen, the formless. But the unseen becomes to the bewildered conscience the formless;—the negative of a world, the darkest conception a man may have of that which is without himself. He brings into it a more terrible darkness, that which is *within* himself; the worm of conscience which he cannot kill, the fire he can never quench." (Pp. 160, 162.)

A terrible description, truly, of the 'outer darkness' meeting the darkness within! But its very terror makes it necessary to ask—Did Christ pass into,—did he pass through,—*that*? Some divines have held, that, to complete the endurance of the penal sentence annexed to guilt, Christ actually descended into the place of torment, not however to redeem either it or its inmates, but that his vicarious sacrifice might be perfect. The author does not, of course, agree with them. Neither

does he agree with the far larger number of theologians who think that the sacrifice was finished on the cross, and that what the Creed was meant to teach was merely the reality of his death;—his body being buried, and his soul passing into the unseen world, as other holy souls do when their bodies are in the grave. The author understands by hell, just in “the simplest language,” hell;—the hell which, he says, men must make for themselves if they cannot find heaven—darkness without—darkness within. Was it into this hell that the Redeemer descended? He may reply that he cannot reduce the mighty words under any forms of intellect; and to himself personally the words may be of the more worth because he cannot. But for the sake of others, whom the gloomy horror of his vivid delineation may unduly haunt, or who may respond too readily to his jubilant call for “merry songs to God” “because there is nothing created that is not redeemed,”—he ought at least to say if the hell he speaks of is part of men’s common lot here, or is the doom awaiting the condemned hereafter; and if the last,—then he ought also to say whether he means that Christ descended into it for the purpose, or to the effect, of either mitigating the severity of the sentence or abridging the term of its duration.

4. The resurrection of Christ, the author thinks, was at first believed, not so much for any great array of proofs, as because it met and satisfied a want which men

felt. "If there was no person who was actually one with God and one with man, the gulph must remain for ever unfilled; if there was, it was not incredible that he had entered into man's death, grave, hell; it was absolutely incredible that he should be holden of them." On this view of the matter, historically, it is needless to dwell, because the author at once comes down to the present time, and raises important general questions. He appeals to "the experience of eighteen centuries,—our experience especially of the confusions and contradictions into which churchmen and church doctors have fallen with respect to the state of men here and hereafter," as "illustrating the words he has been speaking of in this Essay, as they could not have been illustrated in the first ages." (Pp. 164, 165.)

Accordingly, the words death, burial, hell, resurrection, pass in review again, under the new light of this long and melancholy experience.

1. Is death the separation of the soul from the body? The author answers—No. And he proves his point by steps of reasoning which it may be convenient to number.

(1.) "Death, so far as we can judge from any of the phenomena it presents to us, affects the powers of thinking, of motion, of sensation, equally; our *natural* impression would be that whatever influence it produces on one, it produces also on the other."

(2.) But there is "a sense of immortality" which "would not allow people to follow this conclusion of

nature ; *something*, they said, must survive. The soul would go to Hades,—the hero himself to the birds and dogs."

(3.) So they said of old. And so we are apt to speak, until "a confused impression that the soul has more to do with the hero himself, and the body with that which the dogs or birds devour,"—grows into a thorough conviction. Then the "sense of immortality expresses itself in the only language which can express it." And the man "says, '*I shall survive, I cannot perish.*'"

(4.) When the man feels this, first in "horror," and then more calmly, "it becomes impossible for him to divide his soul from that which has been, during all his experience of it, its yokefellow." "Psychology" may gradually teach him that the names, soul and body, "have distinct realities answering to them." But psychology, "imperfect" as it is, must not "be allowed to interfere with the witness of his conscience—that he, who uses equally the powers of thought and the powers of motion and sensation which have been intrusted to him, is responsible for both ;—that, however they may be divided or united, they are both intimately attached to his personality."

(5.) The man has now "a much stronger sense of his connexion with the deeds done in the body than when he was drawing those artificial lines, and also a much stronger conviction of the dignity and sacredness of the body than those can entertain who would separate it



from the soul." And "the marvel of death, which seems to extinguish soul as well as body, and yet which he can neither hope nor fear will extinguish *him*, presents itself under a new aspect. He *must* have a solution." (Pp. 165-167.)

(6.) The solution is to be found in the death of Christ. "He poured out his soul as well as his body to death." It was "the death of a soul as well as of a body."

The author says—"Those who have wished to represent his death as different from all others, for the sake of enhancing its worth, have dwelt upon this as its most wonderful characteristic." Is this candid? Does he not know that whatever they may hold as to what Christ suffered in his soul, and however they may express their views on that awful subject, they would shrink with horror from the doctrine he is himself here propounding? And well they may. For it involves nothing short of this shocking conclusion, that our blessed Lord, soul and body together, lay for three days in the sepulchre!

That conclusion is inevitable, whether the author sees it or not. "To me," he says, "the death of Christ seems the most wonderful, because from it I am able to learn what other deaths are,—what the death of man is." How this bears upon the doctrine of the Atonement, it is not to the purpose here to inquire. It must mean, however, that the death of Christ was not different from other deaths. "Christ gave up all that was his own,—he gave up *himself* to his Father." But what



was "*himself*" after he was dead, and before he rose from the dead? On the common theory of death, the question is easily answered. His body was in the grave; himself, his living soul, was with God. But what answer can the author's theory suggest? Nor will it avail to say that the same question might be asked respecting others as well as Christ. In the case of all others, what is buried, according to the author, ceases altogether and for ever to be part of the person. But the body which saw no corruption, and came out of the tomb on the third day, cannot be thus disposed of. What was buried on the evening before the Sabbath, and reappeared on the morning of the first day of the week, must, on the author's theory, have been the entire man,—'the man Christ Jesus.'

From its first step, the reasoning assumes what no intelligent reader of Butler's *Analogy*, entitled to taunt his opponents with that book as this author does, would have asserted; not at least without proof. The starting point is the very opposite of Butler's. Butler founds his whole argument on the fact that you do not see the mental faculties arrested by death, while you do see the bodily functions stopped; and his argument is, that you have no right to infer a discontinuance of action without evidence, and in the face of the natural law or principle which presumes continuance. The author, at the outset, exactly reverses this process. And at the close, the question is really narrowed, whatever he may say, to a

very simple,—but a very solemn,—dilemma :—If Christ was true and very man,—and if his resurrection was a real fact,—then, either his soul was with God while his body was in the grave,—or he was, both soul and body, buried till the third day. This is not a dilemma to be trifled with, nor one to be evaded under any plea of dislike to logical forms in spiritual matters.

The sum of all, as the author puts the case, is this :—  
“ 1. If we were indeed created and constituted in Christ,—if he was the root of our humanity,”—“ we should not then have occasion to ask how much perishes or survives in the hour of death. We should assume that all must perish, to the end that all may survive.” (Pp. 165-168.)  
“ 2. Such a conclusion ” he immediately adds, “ would go far to help us through that terrible perplexity into which we fall, respecting the body, and that which we commit to the ground.”

The belief that “ the mystery of death is the division of soul and body ” makes us “ cling, with a deep love, to those remains which yet we are forced to regard with a kind of loathing.” We are tempted, like the Romanists, to invest them with miraculous powers, and worship them. Or we “ take our own Protestant way of asserting the sanctity of relics, by maintaining that at a certain day they will all be gathered together, and that the very body to which they once belonged will be reconstructed out of them.” (P. 168.)

Thus the author stigmatizes the prevalent doctrine of

the resurrection of the dead. It is "an immense demand made upon our faith;" and that too, "by divines who would yet shrink instinctively from saying that what they call a living body here, *is* a mere congeries of particles,—who would denounce any man as a materialist if he said that." What does the author mean? Has his noble zeal against Protestant relic-worship wholly blinded his clear understanding? To say that a living man here is a mere congeries of particles,—might look like materialism. But a very fanatic against materialism might admit the author's formula—"a living body"—to be quite harmless. Worse and worse, however, these divines "use as a text book of Christian evidences Butler's *Analogy*, the ground chapter of which, 'On the Future State,' is based on the argument that there is no proof that death destroys any of our living powers—those of the body more than those of the soul." The argument, on the contrary, separates the two. Still it says "that ordinary attrition may destroy the particles of which the matter of our bodies consists, more than once in the course of a life; so that nothing can be inferred from our depositing the whole of that matter at the moment of dissolution." (Pp. 168, 169.)

These unfortunate divines might demur to this statement of Butler's fundamental argument; they would admit, however, that they are accustomed to avail themselves of "the fact" here cast in their teeth, as proving that it does not require identity of particles to constitute

identity of the body. Nay more, they are accustomed to think that they find some hint of this in Paul's answer to the question—"How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?"—"Thou fool!"—the words are Paul's—"that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain." It is bare grain when sown, 'but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.' Still further, whereas they are taunted with "reading to every mourner that corruption cannot inherit incorruption; that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," (p. 169)—they venture timidly to ask if they may not take shelter behind the adjoining promise, 'This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.' What corruptible? What mortal?—if it be not the lifeless clay we are burying out of our sight.

But the author "hopes, at some other time, to examine the whole of this great chapter, and to see what it actually reveals to us." (P. 171.) Till then, the divines had best maintain a prudent reserve. It may be enough at present, to declare in their name generally, that an identity equivalent to that of the 'bare grain' sown with the 'body' that springs from it, will fully satisfy their most extravagant demands; and moreover, that they lay their account with finding as great a difference

between the 'vile body' on which they drop a last tear while the cold earth covers it in, and the same body changed, and 'fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ,' as there is between the rotting seed which the earth "devours and assimilates to itself" and the plant of beauty and renown on which the summer sun shines brightly. Such identity, and such difference, they believe that there will be. And more than that they do not ask to understand.

Is any man entitled to speak of this—the common belief of Christendom,—of Romanist, Protestant, Unitarian, all alike,—as "this notion of a resurrection of relics,—of that corruption which our Lord did not see?" (P. 170.) Is it fitting to apply such language to it, even when he who applies it is to offer what he may consider rather a complimentary solution of it?

It indicates, it seems, "a very deep conviction that the body of our humiliation must be identical with the body redeemed and renewed;" a conviction "so rooted in the heart that it will absolutely force nature, fact, Scripture, everything, into accordance with it. I must be, in all respects, the same person that I was before I put off my tabernacle; *therefore*, these elements which were once attached to my body, must come from all the ends of the earth to constitute it. What a witness for the reality of a belief, that it can sustain such a contradiction as this rather than cease to exist!" "Soul and body are groaning together under a weight of decay and mor-

tality." "An hour comes which seems to say that their emancipation has taken place; that these Adam conditions belong no more to the man; that as to them he is utterly dead. The preacher of God's gospel runs about saying, 'Oh, no! it is a mistake! These witnesses of the Fall,—these pledges of pain and shame, from which fever, consumption, cholera, after days or years of suffering, have at last set your friend free,—belong to him inseparably, necessarily, eternally. They *are* that body, the most curious, wonderful, glorious, of God's works; they are not, as your consciences tell you, as the Scripture tells you, the proofs that this wonderful fabric has suffered a monstrous and cruel outrage; that it needs a deliverer to raise it and renew it.' A strange gospel, one would think." (P. 171.) Certainly, a very strange gospel indeed! But whose is it? '*An Meliboei?*' At any rate, it is worth looking at.

First of all, what is this "wonderful fabric?" And what are the proofs that it "has suffered a monstrous and cruel outrage?" Are the remains we bury the proofs of this? "One would think" that the "Adam conditions" of "decay and mortality,"—"pledges of pain and shame,"—might be "fever, consumption, cholera," and visitations of that nature preying upon men's bodies, and cutting them down. But, oh no! These kindly "set your friend free." And the material body from which they set him free, is itself, as it would seem, the sum and substance of the "Adam conditions" that are to "belong to him no more."



The author would count it foul scorn to be charged with holding any of the heresies of the Gnostical teachers. And yet it would puzzle the most learned adept in these old controversies to draw the line between what they thought of the bodies which they burned or buried, and what this whole passage must be understood to teach, if it has any definite meaning at all.

“ ‘*As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive,*’ is St Paul’s broad statement.” And what does the author give as its meaning? “Christ is the Lord of man, the Lifegiver of man, the true Man: Adam is the root of his individuality, of his disease, of his death. All is strictly in order. Death has its accomplishment; the Adam dies and is buried, and sees corruption; Christ gives himself to death, and sees no corruption. If a man has an Adam nature and is also related by a higher and closer affinity to Christ,—is the effect of that union that he shall be redeemed, body and soul, out of the corruption which is deposited in the grave, or that it shall be his future, as it has been his past, inheritance?” (P. 171.)

That which is deposited in the grave the Apostle calls ‘this corruptible;’ the author calls it “the corruption.” Perhaps the difference of expression is accidental and unimportant. At all events the author’s doctrine is plain enough. The effect of union to Christ is, that “a man shall be redeemed, body and soul, out of the corruption which is deposited in the grave.” Death,



therefore, is the resurrection. At death, the man, body and soul, leaves for ever behind, what is not the body, but relics or remains which the earth devours and assimilates to itself.

All this, the author thinks, would be generally admitted to be the amount of Paul's teaching in that "great chapter," were it not for two expressions,—“the twinkling of an eye”—and “the last trump.” (P. 172.)

As to the former, there is no great difficulty; it simply denotes suddenness. It is used when men watch the last breath departing from a dear friend; “they say it has been but the twinkling of an eye, and what a change has come!” Thus the mourners instinctively exclaim. Nor are they disturbed by the thought of “any want of identity between him that has been and him that is. Though the decaying, agonised frame is lying calm and at rest, they do not then doubt that he who spoke to them a few minutes before, did not derive his powers of speech, any more than the celestial smile which still remains in the clay, from that clay. Faith and reason, however crushed and confounded, are too strong, in that hour of reality, for a notion so cold and so inhuman.” (P. 173.)

Apparently the author considers that notion, so cold and so inhuman, to be involved in the doctrine which he is combating. And if so, it is not surprising that he combats it. But there are different ways of looking at the same thing. One might say, as he caught a friend's

expiring sigh,—I never believed, when his eloquent speech and celestial smile cheered me in life, that he derived them from the chiselled clay which sculptor vainly sought to copy or to rival. I do not believe it now. My very grief is that because the living soul is gone, that speech is dumb and that smile already fading away. But you tell me that the clay, as you call it,—the clay still beautiful and not yet cold,—is a worthless mass of corruption, which my friend has cast off for ever, and which earth is to devour and assimilate to itself, so that nothing of it is ever to be seen again. And I turn from the notion so cold and so inhuman, to listen to an apostolic whisper; ‘This corruptible shall put on incorruption.’

“But the trump of the archangel! that seems to put all belief of a resurrection of the body to an inconceivable distance, and to make the hypothesis which identifies it with a resurrection of remains, after all, the only scriptural one.” (P. 173.)

What the author says on this subject is quite away from the question. After roundly rating Protestants for undervaluing pictures like Michael Angelo’s, and complimenting pious and intelligent Romanists on their right use of them;—deprecating, moreover, an undue zeal against symbolism, as tending ultimately, through excessive spiritualising, to “the driest and most material conceptions being added on to the spiritual one, as a necessary support of its feebleness;”—he

proceeds to deal with the symbol of the archangel's trumpet. He finds its origin in the trumpet at Sinai. Prophets and apostles used it to denote "convulsions of nature," or whatever events were fitted to indicate that the "King was coming forth to punish the earth." Paul expected "an archangel's trumpet to sound in his own day which would call the nations, his own first, into God's judgment." He connects it also with "the condition of each individual man." To every man, the archangel's trumpet sounds in everything which warns him that "a day of revelation and discovery" "is at hand, which rouses him to seek for light, and to fly from darkness." And at death, 'in the twinkling of an eye,' "what had merely sounded to him here as some common note of preparation for death, will be recognised as the archangel's trumpet calling him to account." (Pp. 174-177.)

The real question is,—admitting what is said of the origin and frequent use of the symbol,—does its introduction in that "great chapter" indicate a simultaneous resurrection of a race, or successive resurrections of individuals? That question the author does not touch. Let a plain man, reading the chapter with unbiassed mind, answer it for himself.

The author's view of judgment, present and future, may be afterwards considered. Even if his view is conceded for the sake of argument,—and the judgment to which the trump of the archangel summons every

man is admitted to be nothing more than the coming of "a time when the light will burst in upon him, and shew him things as they are; when he will know that there is all life for him in Christ, and that there is all death in himself,"—still it does not follow that the graves are never to 'yield their ancient charge.' At present it is enough to bear in mind the meaning and grounds of the author's belief, "that Christ was buried in order that the body might be claimed as an heir of life; as redeemed from corruption." (P. 178.) Let it be added, however, that, in his sense of it, this would have been better proved, if, being buried, Christ had not risen from the dead;—if he had left in the grave the relics or remains which his followers have to leave there, as it seems, for ever. Certainly, on the author's theory, the resurrection of our Lord is an inconvenience. It affords no proof that what is deposited in the grave is worthless, and is never to be owned as worthy. In the case of Christ, what lay in the grave was rescued from its power before it could experience its corruption. He is thus separated from me. His resurrection is an entirely different thing from mine — from my death. His experience of death, including in death the grave, is not mine at all. He left nothing in the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathea laid him. The Joseph of my house may lay me in the tomb. Is the sepulchre redeemed and sanctified for me? It can only be so upon the ground, that what of me is buried in that

grave is as sacred, and as sure of a resurrection, as was what of Christ lay in the new sepulchre between the dark night of his death and the bright morning of his resurrection. It is absurd and offensive to say that Christ is one with me, or that I am one with him, in respect of his burial, if he left nothing in the tomb, and if nothing of what I leave in it is ever to be mine again. Take it in any view that can be suggested, the interval between Good Friday and Easter Sunday,—the interval between the death and the resurrection of Christ,—presents, according to the author's theory, a very perplexing enigma.

3. Nor is there any solution of it in what follows relative to the descent into hell. "An enormous weight," it seems, has been crushing "the human spirit." "We are told to believe in a *place* of *disembodied* spirits." "Place appertains to body." "This is a logical principle, and it accords with our higher instincts." "People *talk* of their friends as disembodied. When they *think* of them, they are obliged to suppose them clothed with bodies. They admit the necessity; it is part, they say, of their weakness. They *ought* to feel otherwise."

This, then, is the "enormous weight;" this is the nightmare. It takes two alternate shapes of heavy horror, as its enormous weight sits on the panting bosom. Now it is a logical principle; anon, it is a higher instinct.

From the incubus of the logical principle, perhaps

some relief might be found in Isaac Taylor's *Theory of a Future Life*. But, in fact, except among the schoolmen, who has ever been distressed by it? Are the questions about angels and points of needles to be raised again? Are not the angels spirits? Or if you hold that they have a certain kind of corporeity, as some think, and that departed souls may possibly be—in the same sense with the angels—spirits, having what the angels have,—this may satisfy Aquinas himself. But, really, the maxim that spirits cannot exist in place, would amount to this, that there can be no created spirits at all,—none without bodies. Subtlety set aside, however, a Christian may be satisfied with the assurance that to depart is to be with Christ,—to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

The higher instinct also may be best satisfied, and indeed can only be satisfied, by that very doctrine respecting the Resurrection which the author rejects; which would seem, indeed, expressly designed to satisfy it. You may think of your friends as clothed with bodies; you ought to do so. The New Testament as well as the Old bids you chiefly fix your thoughts, when you sorrow for the dead, on your Lord's second coming and their being raised to meet him. And what you look for then, enables you now to think of your friends as clothed with bodies, far more distinctly and with far more of warm hope, than the doctrine which tells you that all you are again to see of them is what is finally and



for ever separated from the loved remains to which you cling in one long and last embrace.

Surely the anticipation of the Lord's second coming, of which the New Testament is so full, may explain and justify sufficiently our "thinking of our friends as clothed with bodies." But it seems that this is a feeling which we acknowledge to be wrong. It is our infirmity. We confess that we ought to feel otherwise, because "Scripture commands it."

"How and where?" indignantly asks the author on our behalf; while with somewhat too impetuous haste, he sets himself to prove the contrary. Scripture "speaks of the bodies of saints coming forth, and shewing themselves after the resurrection. It speaks of Moses and Elias appearing to the disciples. It records acts of our Lord on earth, by which bodies are recalled from the unseen regions into ours." (P. 179.) These are his proofs that Scripture permits us to think of our departed friends as already clothed with bodies,—all the bodies they are ever to have.

Was there ever such a jumble? 'And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.' These 'bodies of the saints' came forth out of their graves. Are the graves, then, the place of embodied spirits after death? One would say that any place of disembodied spirits were better than that. So much for the first proof. As to the second, does the author forget that Elias was translated? Many have thought that the



mysterious account of the latter end of Moses, and the allusion to a contest about his body between the archangel and the devil, taken along with his appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, may suggest the probability of a translation, or an immediate resurrection, in his case also. Be that, however, as it may, few persons will feel that the scene on that mountain casts much light on the condition of men in the unseen world. These translations, by the way, of Elijah and Enoch, might somewhat disturb the author's theory. Have Enoch and Elijah got rid of their "Adam conditions?" They took with them that from which fever or cholera should have freed them. How is that? But to come to the third proof,—the most amazing of all,—our Lord "recalled bodies from the unseen regions into ours." When and where? No doubt the body of Lazarus was in an unseen region when 'it was in a cave, and a stone lay upon it.' But our Lord made the region visible before he recalled the body. 'Take ye away the stone,' he said, before he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus come forth.' This is surely sad trifling indeed. Instances of bodies,—decaying and decayed,—coming from their graves and being reanimated by the souls which had quitted them, Scripture records; but not one solitary instance of a man returning, body and soul together, from the unseen regions into ours.

Hades, as *first*, the horror of the "men of the old world," — *secondly*, relieved by the introduction of a

poetic Elysium and the forms of human justice,—*thirdly*, to the Jew who dare not adopt the heathen dream, “a frightful vision of mere death and darkness,” from which he “fled to trust in the living God,”—is now stript of its unknown gloom. Whatever it be, Christ has been there; and that is enough for us. (P. 180.)

It is generally admitted now, that to the Jew a dark cloud hung over the question—What and where are men to be after death, and before the resurrection? The hope of the resurrection was his stay,—the thought of the interval between death and that event was often a heavy burden to him. Christ has removed the veil. ‘Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.’ ‘To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ ‘To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ Is not this a view of the matter as intelligible and as satisfactory as the author’s?

The place of spirits he finds wherever spirits dwell. “This earth is such a place; we who dwell in it are spirits.” Other spirits may dwell in it. The stars and planets may be places of spirits. But “the question is,”—“must I invent a place,—not for spirits, but for shadows?” No. That is not the question. It is a begging of the question; and so offensive a sneer, moreover, as to be utterly unworthy of the author. Let him prove that disembodied spirits must be shadows,—let him prove that because my friend’s body is to be raised, therefore, until it is raised, my friend is a shadow,—

then let him wither me with heartless sarcasm. Meanwhile, I can clothe my absent friend with all the attributes which the author ascribes to those whom he here calls spirits,—with this additional hope, that when I meet him at the resurrection, I shall find him in a body identical with what I deposit in the grave,—only as much surpassing it, in glory and in beauty, as the rich luxuriance of the waving corn surpasses the bare grain from which it springs.

The text about Christ preaching “to the spirits in prison,” may surely be best interpreted,—and the author, following St Augustine, is inclined to interpret it,—as “pointing more to the time of Noah, than to a later time.” He tries, indeed, to turn the traditionary notions connected with it to account, as witnesses that Christ is “the great Deliverer of spirits.” He “thanks God that men have been sure that there was a justification for that faith in Scripture, whether it is to be found in the particular texts to which they appealed, or not.” Does he mean that Christ delivers “all spirits, who have lived in all times?” This was not precisely the faith which the parties to whom he refers found in this text. But at any rate, according to his own view, it has nothing to do with “a place of spirits.” (P. 182.)

One more objection to his language he anticipates. “Pushed to its consequences, it might prove that there is no heaven and no hell.” Nay, if we will “forgive” him, it is our teaching that tends that way. According

to him, "righteousness, love, truth," are the "heaven" presented to men by Christ and his apostles. "And since they reveal heaven to us, they of necessity make known hell also. The want of righteousness, truth, love, the state which is contrary to these, is and must be hell." (Pp. 182, 183.)

" 'Mystical! mystical! States, not places! So we expected.' " Such is the shout of triumph which the author fancies himself to hear from us, as from those who exult in the arrest of a thief they have been long in chase of, or in the detection of a diabolical plot they have been eagerly watching. Mildly and meekly he replies,—“A danger to be feared; and one to be carefully avoided. I have tried to avoid it, by saying that I know of no place for disembodied spirits.” He “cannot understand how men realise a state except in some place.” It would be strange if he did; strange if he or any one should try. Living creatures must have ‘a local habitation’ at least, if not ‘a name.’ But then, the kind of local habitation which they have may somewhat affect them, for good or for evil, for weal or for woe. The question, therefore, is still a relevant and fair one;—Is the distinction between heaven and hell a distinction of place, of outward locality,—or a distinction of state, of personal character, merely? That is the question raised by the objection with which the author has to deal, as he himself puts it. He must know this very well; and it would have been far more manly and

straightforward if, instead of blandly smiling at the ridiculous imputation of an impossible belief in states without places, he had avowed in plain terms whether he admits or denies the separation of men after death into two classes, and their departure into two separate abodes. It is unworthy of himself and of the subject to meet the question as he does. It may be very true, as he reminds us, that "some spirits in different places of this earth are very miserable, and others in a certain degree of blessedness,"—that "the place in which they are does not make the difference,"—that "the moral and spiritual condition of the inhabitants is the means of making a heaven or a hell of this earth." These may be very good topics or truisms in morals; and if there are any who imagine that to be in one locality rather than in another will insure their happiness, the Horatian commonplace will be in point, '*Cælum non animum mutat, qui trans mare currit.*' But the author goes a step further, and very ingeniously carries us, before we are well aware of it, the full two miles when we think we are only going with him one. "Scripture sustains this conclusion." What conclusion? Apparently, the conclusion that the place in which we are does not constitute our misery or our blessedness, and that, according to the moral and spiritual condition of its inhabitants, this earth may be a heaven or a hell. So one would say; but it is not so; that is not the conclusion which the author means; he presses the argu-

ment much beyond that. He seems to make the condition of things, in this respect, now subsisting on the earth, the type and sample of what it is and must be everywhere and always in the universe. This he does on the ground, first of Scripture, secondly of analogy.

What Scripture "tells me of the kingdom of heaven, shews me," he says, "that man must anywhere be blessed, if he has the knowledge of God and is living as his willing subject; everywhere accursed, if he is ignorant of God and at war with him." This he knows; and, "believing God's revelation of his Son," he may, by the help of Butler and the argument from analogy, "know a little more." "Death does not change the substance of the human creature, or any of its powers or moral conditions, but only removes that which had crushed its substance, checked the exercise of its powers, kept its moral conditions out of sight." "The laws of God's kingdom in its different regions are not different;" everywhere to be holy is to be happy; to be unholy is to be miserable. The good has not "anywhere reached its climax;" there must be progress always. And wherever we may be, if "left to ourselves, without a Redeemer and a Father, there must be a continual descent into a lower depth." (Pp. 183-185.) All this is true, whether heaven and hell are separate places or not, whether evil is to continue for ever or not. But is this all that the author can say that he knows? Is this all the hope the Bible gives to a man who has been taught to know God and to



live as his obedient subject—who painfully and imperfectly, with much failure in good and many symptoms of evil, is continuing ‘faithful unto death,’ expecting that ‘Christ will give him the crown of life?’ The universal Church has been accustomed to believe, that such a man after death is completely and for ever delivered from evil and the strife with evil; that he dwells in a home into which nothing to cause either sin or sorrow can enter; that he is with Christ in pure and perfect peace now; that a time is at hand when he shall appear with Christ in glory. That is what is meant by heaven, call it a state or a place as you please. Are there any with whom God deals thus when they die? How he may deal with others,—with those who quit this life ignorant of him and at war with him,—it might be premature at this stage to inquire. For the present, it is enough to urge the question,—Are those who know God here, and live as his willing subjects, separated from among these others? Are they differently situated,—differently treated,—in a word, brought into a condition of perfect security from all ill, and perfect enjoyment of all the means of progressive holiness and blessedness? Beyond a fuller and freer development of what they are when they die, and the continued operation of the general laws of the kingdom of heaven applicable everywhere—anywhere—to all,—the laws identifying holiness with happiness, and sin or evil to whatever extent it exists with misery,—there is



absolutely no provision, so far as the author apparently knows, for the position even of the most faithful servants of God being better in the life that is to come than it is in the life that now is.

4. The preceding argument on the part of the author leaves little room for the article in the Creed about the resurrection. But, nevertheless, he faces the difficulty. He takes his stand on the conversation of our Lord with Martha. She says of her brother—‘I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day.’ This is Martha’s “point of view,” learned from the Pharisees. But “a glorious mystery” is “implied” in our Lord’s word, and the accompanying act. ‘Jesus answered, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.’

A simple account of this may be given. Martha believed in the resurrection of the body. This was the belief of the Old Testament saints. Our Lord does not supersede, or set aside, that belief. He adds to it another which had been less clearly recognised. He opens up the mystery of the intermediate state so far as to give emphatic assurance that it does not imply a cessation or interruption of life. That really is all. There is no proof whatever that Martha was wrong in her belief,—however “the Pharisees may have instructed her.” She was right, apparently, so far as her belief went. The Redeemer does not discard—he supplements—her belief.

To join issue with the author in his closing appeal to Unitarians, is beyond the range of an examination intended rather to guard the truths which Unitarianism assails. But at the same time, it is but right to say that Unitarians had better hold fast their faith in the resurrection of the body, in the face of all this author's reasoning, than accept any substitute for it that he has proposed. The theory of human life, present and future,—for which the Unitarians are asked to surrender the one peculiar doctrine of revelation which they hold in common with the general body of Christians,—is not a theory, to say the least of it, which will better stand the test of reason and Scripture than the old belief respecting the resurrection of the dead.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE REMEDY APPLIED—ESSAYS IX. X.

### ESSAY IX.—ON JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

THE author introduces the subject of Justification by anticipating “a fear which is both natural and righteous,” as likely to arise in connexion with the “broad statements” put forward and defended in his “last four Essays.” “Does not such language” as he has been using throughout these Essays “overlook the notorious fact, that good and evil men are mixed together in this world,—that the evil far outnumber the good? Does it not break down moral distinctions, which it is our first duty to preserve? Does it not practically deny that God approves the just and condemns the wicked?” (P. 189.)

The author hints that he might complain of such objections, because “the whole purpose of his argument has been to shew how essentially and eternally opposed good and evil are; how impossible it is that they ever can blend; and what, according to God’s revelation of

himself, he has done and is doing to separate them." He seems to think that by settling these two points,—*first*, that good and evil are opposed and cannot blend,—and, *secondly*, that God is carrying on a process of separation,—he not only sufficiently guards the interests of righteousness,—but renders it almost unnecessary to raise any question as to the distinction between the righteous and the wicked personally, or as to the way in which a man passes from the one class to the other. In the mean time, out of deference to certain parties, not easily recognised, who say or think that "instead of identifying ourselves with the mass of the creatures around us, we must become most entirely unlike them, or we never shall be like Him who you say is perfectly good and just,"—he is willing to enter into the inquiry,—the rather because he respects "their honest and deep conviction," and also because he finds that "this difficulty, in one shape or other, has given occupation to every age of the Christian Church." (P. 190.)

1. It was felt in the apostolic Church, whose "members must carefully distinguish themselves from those among whom they dwelt." "Baptism became the sign of their fellowship,—separating the churchman from the common earthly man." But "the new dispensation had penetrated below the surface to the roots of things;" and therefore "baptism could not merely denote an outward contrast." It "must import the most inward purification, the removal of that common evil which all had inherited from Adam."

This was the separating "opinion" in the early Church; held amid "innumerable checks and counteractions:" but yet "the formal recognised school maxim." It influenced practice. It led to "the doctrine of post-baptismal sin." That doctrine, making baptism so formidable that men were fain to postpone it to the last,—and in many other ways oppressing the conscience, or debauching it,—so wrought that "it seemed as if the great line which separated the Church from the world was one which could not be wisely passed." Other lines were drawn. "One class of the baptized" might live like ordinary men; "others might become religious,—might eschew, as far as possible, human ties and obligations, and give themselves to the service of God. Here was another experiment for the purpose of separating the righteous from the unrighteous. A church was to be set up within the Church. The whole fellowship was not one of saints, but it was one which might nurture saints." This habit of mind was counteracted by influences, partly of clerical ambition, partly of true saintly beneficence. But it was strong; and its effects upon morality, within and without the Church, were disastrous. (Pp. 193, 194.)

Such is the author's account of "the experiments" made in the early Church "for separating the righteous from the wicked." The chief objection to its accuracy is, that it assumes as its starting-point, not merely baptism, but a particular doctrine concerning baptism.

Its relevancy to the question on hand is another matter. It will fall to be considered as the inquiry goes on.

2. The author begins again at the Reformation, when "there came a clear and effectual testimony against" previous "notions and practices;"—"there is one righteousness, that which is in Christ," for all men. "Faith in the Son of God is the only deliverance for the conscience of any man." And going back to Paul, the Reformers were forced to say,—“God himself is the Justifier. He has given Christ for our sins, and has raised him again for our justification. He calls you, each of you, to know that Just One, in whom you are accepted.” (Pp. 195, 196.)

“This was levelling language;” so much so as to lay the Reformers open to a double charge on the part of the Romanists, who said:—“By preaching faith without the deeds of the law, you efface moral distinctions; by speaking so generally as you do of Christ’s death and resurrection, you seem to take away the privileges of the baptized man.’” “The Reformers retaliated;—‘you have overthrown all difference between the pure and the impure; inevitably, because you have destroyed all difference between those who believe and those who do not believe.’ That being the danger which they dreaded most, they set themselves to consider how they might successfully avoid it. The result was, a new set of experiments to separate the Church from the world, and then to create a church within the Church.” (Pp. 196, 197.)

Three principles of separation are specified. 1. "Faith justifies; but it must be ascertained who have faith." 2. "Christ's is the only righteousness; but to whom is that righteousness imputed?" 3. "God calls men to the knowledge of his Son; but if he calls, does he not also reject?" These are the "plans" which "Protestants have invented," "for dividing," 1. "the faithful from the unbelieving;" 2. "those who belong to Christ from those who have no relation to him;" 3. "the elect from the reprobate."

Now, there is one distinction between these principles of separation and those of the earlier Church, which it is important to notice here. The lines drawn by the Protestants, as given by the author, are lines legible in heaven. Their predecessors insisted on lines palpable on earth. The three Protestant divisions may be right or wrong; but at any rate they are divisions with which God and each man's own heart have exclusively to do. Who have faith? To whom is Christ's righteousness imputed? Who are elect? These are all of them questions between the individual conscience and the Lord of the conscience. No external rite can discriminate here. No priest can decide. Men may form a probable opinion concerning their fellow-men, for the regulation of their own conduct towards them, in the fellowship of the Church or in the common intercourse of society. But the distinctive doctrine of Protestantism is, that whatever lines of separation it recognises



are lines which God and conscience alone can trace. This may not materially affect the author's judgment of Protestant principles of division as compared with the Romanist ones. But it is a real difference, which he ought not to have overlooked.

Both, however, according to him, have produced "similar effects." In fact, the Protestant lines, as he represents them, are beyond all question the most revolting of the two. "It seems," first, "as if faith signified a persuasion that God will not punish us hereafter for the sins we have committed here, because we have that persuasion;" secondly, "as if some men were accounted righteous, for Christ's sake, by a mere deception, it not being the fact that they are righteous;" thirdly, "as if God pleased of mere arbitrariness that certain men should escape his wrath, and that certain men should endure the full measure of it." And he speaks of the Protestants whom he has in view as persons "who seem as if they thought their faith was merely to procure them an exemption from penalties which others must suffer;"—"who seem, by their words, as if they could bear to suspect Him of a fiction;"—"whose phrases ascribe to Him a principle of conduct upon which they would themselves be ashamed to act." (P. 198.)

It is idle to compliment those to whom he ascribes such opinions, with "their willingness to bear any punishment rather than be slaves of sin;" or "their zeal for God's truth;" or their "acknowledging in their

hearts God to be without partiality, and to be altogether just." Not only does he thus add insult to injury, but he must be plainly told that it is altogether incredible that he can be in earnest in these hollow praises. To use his own expression, it would be necessary "to bring him distinctly to book;" and to call for articulate proof of the charges which he ventures to allege against his Protestant brethren. It would really almost seem as if the author's notion of charity and candour were this;—blacken your opponent to the utmost pitch of blackness by making his belief thoroughly odious,—and then generously whitewash him with the insinuation that after all his belief is a sham.

Saving faith, imputed righteousness, electing love; or, reversing the order,—sovereign love as the origin, the righteousness of Christ as the ground, faith as the means or instrument, of justification and eternal life;—these are confessedly the doctrines maintained by those who are commonly regarded as orthodox and evangelical Protestants;—doctrines of which they are not ashamed; doctrines in which they glory. But to a man, they would repudiate with indignation the author's caricature of them. They trace the salvation of any of Adam's race to the mere good pleasure of God. They presume not to fathom his counsels, but they are sure that these will ultimately be seen to have been all wise and just; and they gratefully adore the love which originated a plan of mercy for the lost. They own the righteousness

of Christ,—the righteousness of his glorious person, character, obedience, and atoning death,—as the only ground of a guilty sinner's acceptance in the sight of God. They believe in the imputation of his righteousness, by no deception or fiction, but really and justly, to those who are actually united to him,—who are made one with him by the power of the Holy Spirit,—and who are accounted righteous, because being in him they are righteous, as he is righteous. And finally, they teach that faith,—reliance on him, trust in him, receiving him and resting upon him,—is the act or exercise of the soul,—of the whole heart and mind,—which effects this true and blessed union between the Saviour and the sinner. This, according to them, is the gospel. This gospel they carry to every living man, without any distinction, or exception, or limitation, or reserve; assuring him that Christ is near him, in his very heart, if he will but have him, to be his Redeemer, Lord, King,—his all in all.

If the separation of men into two classes now, or if their separation into two classes hereafter, be the result of such a gospel,—this at least may be asked: Is it possible to imagine a message from heaven more fitted to swell the ranks of the saved,—upon the supposition that fallen men are to be tried as responsible beings at all, and that their wills are not to be forced? It obliterates all human lines, all outward badges of distinction. It makes all men absolutely equal. The preacher may

unwarily or unwisely embarrass it; but so far as its three great doctrines are concerned, it tends to unite and not to separate. And it may be asked again with all reverence: What more could have been done, by means of any overtures of peace on the part of God, to prevent separation?—unless, indeed, upon the supposition of all freedom and responsibility on the part of men, as to their reception of these overtures, being entirely superseded and annulled.

The real truth, however, is that the author vehemently opposes all theories or doctrines implying separation, or even the possibility of separation, under the economy of the gospel. This will appear plainly enough when his own view of justification comes to be considered.

But first, let him dispose of the other views of it which he has been expounding. Every attempt which has been hitherto made to draw lines and limitations about the gospel of God, for the purpose of dividing the righteous from the wicked, has tended to confound them,—‘to put evil for good and good for evil.’ What then is to be done? “God himself has established eternal distinctions, which become clear to us when, and only when, we are content to be the heralds of his free and universal love.” “These distinctions are most recognised when we look upon all men as interested in Christ’s death and resurrection.” (P. 199.)

What does this mean? Are the distinctions to be recognised abstractly as eternal, and never to be applied

to persons, either in time or in eternity? What connexion is there between the question,—whether or not these distinctions are eternal, and revealed by God as eternal?—and the question,—who are interested in Christ's death and resurrection? Are we told that we can best recognise distinctions in principle, when we resolve to recognise no distinctions in persons? Is it meant that good and evil can be best separated,—as “eternal distinctions” separate them,—when the impossibility of separating good and evil persons is confessed?

The author apparently thinks so. He will on no account have any separation of persons. He thus “recognises eternal distinctions.” And he harmonises and reconciles “the zeal of Romanists for baptism, of Protestants for faith;”—with equal hand “doing justice” impartially to both. (P. 199.)

The “first and highest justification” is found in the resurrection of Christ. Thus the author opens his own view. “God justifies the man who perfectly trusted in him;—declares him to have the only righteousness which he had ever claimed,—the only one which it would not have been a sin and a fall in him to claim,—the righteousness of his Father,—the righteousness which was his so long as he would have none of his own, so long as he was content to give up himself.” He then quotes, as the language of Paul, ‘He was put to death in the flesh, he was justified in the spirit.’ And he adds,—“this is the apostle's language; this is his clear, noble, satis-

factory distinction, which is reasserted in various forms throughout the New Testament." (P. 200.)

The distinction is allowed and much prized by "divines." They hold strongly that the contrast, or antithesis, between the death and the resurrection of Christ is—that in the one there was condemnation, in the other justification. In dying, he "was made a curse,"—he was condemned,—for us. In rising again, he is justified as the righteous One,—himself the very righteousness of God for us. They believe also that he was justified because "he was content to give up himself,"—because, although he had all righteousness and all life in himself, he claimed neither, but surrendered both; being willing to take upon him the guilt of our sin, and die our death on 'the accursed tree.' With this qualification, they would accept the author's statement as to "the first and highest idea of justification."

"But St Paul takes it for granted, that this justification of the Son of God and the Son of man was his own justification,—his own, not because he was Saul of Tarsus, not because he was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but because he was a man." His "zeal" would have "worn out," his "arguments against his own countrymen would have fallen to pieces, if he had not been assured that Christ's resurrection declared him to be the Son of man, the head of man, and therefore, that his justification was the justification of each man." (P. 201.)

Paul says that the resurrection of Christ declared him



to be "the Son of God, with power." He says also that Christ "rose again for our justification." But nowhere in all his writings is it either assumed or asserted that the resurrection of Christ, or his justification in his resurrection, was the justification of the apostle himself, or that it was "the justification of each man." Invariably Paul connects his own justification, and the justification of any sinner, whoever he may be, with faith.

The author gives no proof whatever that Paul taught the doctrine which he ascribes to him. But he finds it apparently "taken for granted" in the account which that apostle gives of his own experience under conviction of sin. And in four short sentences, he sums up the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

Paul, it seems, "felt far more deeply than Job did,"—that "he was at war with the law of his being,"—"that there was a righteousness near him, and in him, in which his inner mind delighted. He had been sure that there must be a Redeemer to give the righteousness the victory over the evil; to deliver him out of the power to which he was sold, to satisfy the spirit in him which longed for good. He had thanked God through Jesus Christ his Lord. And now he felt that he was a righteous man; that he had the only righteousness which a man could have,—the righteousness of God,—the righteousness which is upon faith,—the righteousness which is not for Jew more than for Gentile,—which is for all alike." (P. 201.)



This is a general sketch, omitting particulars. No doubt Paul tells us that he had undergone a great change of mind; that the change was effected by the law, condemning him and sentencing him to death; that he had been made to feel, as he had not felt before, the excellence of the law and the justice of his own condemnation; that he had been smitten with a new desire to be what the law required him to be; that all his efforts in that direction had only aggravated his feeling of the righteous sentence of the law being upon him, and of his own helplessness under it as being ‘carnal and sold under sin;’ that he cried for deliverance from that. “And he now thanks God through Jesus Christ his Lord;” because he can say, ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’ Justification, with Paul, is deliverance from condemnation,—from the curse of the law. He does not say that “the justification of Christ was his own justification,” or that it “was the justification of each man.” But in language unmistakeably implying separation—‘there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’

It is not, however, on the interpretation of Scripture that the author really rests his view, except in the vaguest manner. He rather reasons *a priori*. And now he tests the doctrine which by such reasoning he has reached, by applying it to the two elements or means of separation, as they have hitherto been understood to be,—baptism and faith.

1. Baptism, of course, cannot now be the sign of adherence to a sect, or of a choice made between two religions. It must denote that the baptized man claims his relation to the Son of God, the head of the whole human race. It must denote more. It is the "ordinance of God for men,—his declaration of that which is true concerning men,—of the relation in which men stand to him." "If Christ is not the actual Mediator between God and man,—if his resurrection did not declare that God confessed him in that character, and thereby confessed men to be righteous in him, baptism is a nullity, a mere delusion." (Pp. 201, 202.)

Baptism, then, is the sign and declaration of what is true of all men, without any distinction, that God "has justified his Son, by raising him from the dead;" that "in that act, he has justified the race for which Christ has died;" that "men are justified before God;" that "they are the sons of God in the only-begotten Son." So the author teaches, very emphatically—"By declaring in plain words, that they who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death,—that they put on Christ, that they were to count themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, risen with Christ,—St Paul pointed out the ever-effectual protection against the error into which the Church afterwards fell." What is this panopty? It is "the one great Divine distinction for which the Church substituted its awkward and mischievous theories and practices." (P. 203.)

What! Is there a distinction still? And on this occasion, it must mean a distinction of persons; otherwise it is quite irrelevant. There is "one great divine distinction,"—not perhaps an outward separation,—but a distinction not the less real on that account. And it must be so. The baptized are told that they are "to count themselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, risen with Christ." What if they fail to do so? What of those who notoriously fail to do so? Nor will it avail to say that the old notions about post-baptismal sin are exploded. It is true that there is no room now for the notion that a man may have a "certain justification for a moment," but that, through "yielding to the lusts of the flesh or the power of the evil spirit, the blessing may be his no longer." What then? I may at the present moment be counting myself dead unto sin and alive unto God. In other words, I may be realizing the meaning and blessedness of the justification which my baptism signifies. But what if I yield to the lusts of the flesh or the power of the evil spirit? You tell me that "I have still a righteousness, which is not my own property,—which I may be thankful never can become my own property,—which my baptism proclaims not to be my own property." You tell me that "it is my right and duty at all times to turn to Him in whom I am created, redeemed, justified;—that trust is either lawful at no time, or lawful at every time;—that on no principle, save that of continual trust in the Lord of his

spirit, can a man assert the privilege and glory of his baptism and rise above his enemies." (P. 204.) Good! Baptism, then, makes no distinction; but trust does. Is not this very like a doctrine of justification by faith, after all? Is it not, at least, the doctrine,—that the practical assertion, the actual realization of justification, to any good purpose, is by faith?

2. By all means, says the author. The Reformers were right in calling on all men to believe in the Son of God for their justification. The Church was becoming a mere world. Faithful men must be the instruments of raising it out of that condition. "Faith, they said,—and the conscience of men confirmed their words,—is the ground of right hearty action; unbelief makes it impossible." (P. 205.)

But the Romanist taunts us with our splits and sects. And the author confesses that "the mockery is severe, and is deserved." He traces the evil to "the schemes which Protestants have adopted for the purpose of defining who have a right to be members of Christ's Church, and who have not;"—or "to ascertain who have and who have not the gift of faith, or the right to believe." (P. 205.) Protestants generally would say,—We do not define who have a right to be members of Christ's Church, and who have not. We proclaim that all men have a right. We do not try to ascertain who have and who have not the gift of faith, or the right to believe. The right to believe all men equally have. Who have

and who have not the gift of faith, God alone can tell. We preach Christ, a Saviour for all; his righteousness, a righteousness for all; his blood a ransom for all. To each man we say—‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.’

One is sometimes inclined to hope that the removal of misconception by a calm explanation might go far to satisfy the author that the evangelical doctrine, as commonly held and preached, is not the mischievous pestilence which he imagines it to be; and in particular, that it is as wide and unrestricted as the gospel which he himself proclaims. In fact, an unprejudiced bystander might say to him:—‘After all, what is the difference between you and them? You tell me that I am justified in Christ; that my baptism means this; and that I ought to believe this, and live accordingly. They tell me that there is complete justification in Christ for any man who will have it; and that I ought to believe this, and live accordingly. If I listen to you, I count myself to have been justified when Christ was justified by his resurrection from the dead,—to have been justified all along, even when I had no faith, when I was no believer, but a doubter and denier of the love of God. If I listen to them, I count myself to have been condemned before, and to be justified now, upon my owning Christ and believing God’s love. And after all,’ he might add, ‘if the justification which I realize by believing is not something better than I had before

believing, it scarcely amounts to that acceptance and peace with God which my wounded conscience and weary heart need. You assure me that I have all my life been justified. I feel that I have been and am now condemned. My awakened conscience, and the law of God coming home to it, convince me that if God be such a God as I can reverence and esteem, he must hold me, up to this moment, to be under condemnation. The others, the 'divines,' testify that it must be so,—that Scripture declares it to be so,—that in point of fact it is so,—that I am under condemnation. But they testify also, from the same Scripture, that I need not continue for an hour longer in that state,—because 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,' and 'whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' For anything I can see, their method better meets my case than yours.'

One other objection the author urges: "We must have our own sets of spiritual and carnal men; of those who can make it clear to us that they believe, and of those who cannot." Who must have this? For regulating our own conduct,—for deciding with whom we are to have close fellowship,—we must distinguish between man and man. So, we presume, does the author. But we tell all men, as he does, that it is not with us, or with our judgment, that they have to do, but with their own consciences and their God. But be that as it may, these "divisions are so many premiums to hypocrisy, so



many hindrances to honest men, so many temptations." They tempt the so-called "religious" man "to think that he has not a world and flesh and devil to struggle with," while in reality he may "be an obedient slave of all three. They tempt those who are treated as carnal and worldly, to believe what they are told of themselves, to act as if they had not that longing for good which they yet know that they have, and which God does not disown, for his Son has awakened it, though his servants may be stifling it." (P. 206.)

Now this old objection against the doctrine of justification by faith has at all events some meaning, when it comes from one who holds the doctrine of justification by works. But what the author, according to his own view of justification, can mean by it,—or what he can make of it,—it is very hard to see. The persuasion of my being justified now in Christ as received by faith, may lead to carelessness or unfaithfulness in the war against evil. How is it more apt to do so than the author's persuasion of his having been justified always in Christ as raised from the dead? If the author says that, though justified, he has always had to contend with evil and the evil spirit; and more and more has to do so now, the more he counts himself to be justified;—why, so also say I. And I add, moreover, that the feeling of my being in a different state from that in which I once was,—the belief, so far as I realize it, that whereas I was guilty, condemned, sentenced justly to die, I



am now acquitted, accepted, justified,—gives me new motives and new strength for the contest, rids me of a heavy burden, places me on a new footing with my God, and enables me in his name to overcome every foe. Then again, in dealing with those who, by the author's confession as well as mine, are obedient slaves of the world, the flesh, and the devil,—who has the advantage,—he or I? He tells them, however carnal and worldly, that they are justified already. I testify to them that they are condemned,—that the wrath of God is upon them,—that they are under the curse of the law. He bids them recognise that longing for good which they know that they have. I call and invite them to believe and repent,—to accept the righteousness which in Christ Jesus God brings near to them, that they may be justified from all their transgressions,—to obey those strivings of the Holy Spirit which will not suffer their consciences to have peace or their hearts to be at rest until they seek and find acceptance in the Beloved.

If it be said that this is merely an *argumentum ad hominem*, a kind of retort,—not directly bearing upon the real question at issue;—it is of course admitted to be so. And all that is asked is, that as much, or as little, weight be attached to the author's reasoning as to the attempted reply, excepting in so far as the "general conscience" of mankind may incline towards either.

The closing appeal to Unitarians it is scarcely necessary to notice. The author refers to the sort of alliance

that once existed between Orthodox High Churchmen and Unitarians against "the conversions and spiritual struggles upon which the evangelical teachers dwelt so much," as well as "against the leading evangelical doctrine," as "weakening moral obligations," and putting a "high-flown pedantical morality," in the place of "plain home-spun English honesty and good faith." He refers with satisfaction to Sir James Stephen's Essay 'on the Clapham School,' and to the altered tone of the *Edinburgh Review*, since the palmy days of that prince of wits whom a writer in another journal quotes as 'our irreverend friend, Sidney Smith.' He pays a graceful compliment to the patriotism and philanthropy of the evangelical men of the last century; and while admitting numerous exceptions, he laments the absence of "similar fruits" among "those who talk most of justification by faith in our day." He accounts for it by asking,—“Is it not because they believe justification by faith, instead of believing in Christ the Justifier? Is not the whole principle changed? Is not the formula which represents the principle doing duty for it?” And desiring the Unitarians to distinguish between the evangelical men who still hold the principle and those who merely hold by the formula,—he warns them finally against "falling into the error which he has attributed to our modern Evangelicals, and which infects many besides them,—that of making faith itself an object of trust, almost of worship." (Pp. 207-212.)

What measure of truth there may be in the charge brought against modern Evangelicals, it would scarcely become one of themselves to say. The good fruits are too few ; the tares too many, — “tradesmen mixing chicory with coffee, jobbing merchants and politicians, divines given to slander.” In one remark the author is right. There always is a tendency to substitute for the living principle, its dead formula ;—to cease from dealing with Christ personally, and to begin to deal with some proposition about Christ. The warning against such a tendency is always seasonable. Every earnest man feels the need of it in his own experience. The sad history of the age succeeding the Reformation exemplifies the tendency ; the present race of evangelical Protestants may perhaps be suffering from it. By all means let a revival be sought. And let it not be supposed to be a mere retort if the hint be given, that of all theories respecting the person and work of Christ, that advocated by the author is perhaps the most likely, when it passes out of genial hearts like his own into colder and keener intellects, to degenerate into a mere dry personification of man’s inward sense of right.

The allusions to Cowper and Blanco White might suggest most interesting inquiries, far too serious to be disposed of in a few sentences. It seems odd, however, that the author should not have seen what a large demand he makes, in the case of Cowper, for the very faith which the poet wanted. Does he think that his despair

would have been relieved by the belief that Christ was in him always, merely as the author holds Christ to be in every man? It was a more experimental, a more realized fellowship with Christ that the sufferer desired,—a fellowship which even the author must admit can only be enjoyed by the man who trusts, as alas! it was often not in the power of the poet's disordered mind to trust. The history of Blanco White's struggles after faith, and their ultimate issue in utter and universal unbelief, is a chapter in human nature yet to be written. It may be doubted, however, how far the author's short-hand solution of the problem will be of avail in the writing of it.

#### ESSAY X.—ON REGENERATION.

George Combe and Bishop Butler,—the *Constitution of Man*, and the *Discourses on Human Nature*,—are the poles or pivots on which this Essay turns; or at least the starting points in the inquiry,—What that human nature is whose regeneration is in question.

Combe's book, the author is told, has "had an enormous circulation." He "cannot wonder at its success." Has any one told him, or has he read in the advertisement to the cheap edition, how largely it is endowed—what a sum has been given to reduce the price and push the sale of the poison? But he "does not regret the

success, though," he adds, "I might not easily find a book from the conclusions of which I more entirely dissent. It has, I think, brought the question of education, and many other questions, to the right issue,—What is the constitution of man?" And certainly to know the constitution of man, is the first step towards "the sound and orthodox doctrine" as to the way of dealing rightly with it. Combe may also have some reason to blame "our ancestors" for "knowing little or nothing of man's physical state;"—and even to conclude that "our moralists and divines *are* guessers and nothing else," substituting for the certainty of physical facts, the conjectures of speculation and so-called faith;—insomuch that "if every other method of education is laid aside, and his adopted, as the only one which States can sanction, or which is available for men universally, he and those who have joined with him in advocating it will be much less answerable for the result, than we who have opposed him." (Pp. 214–217.)

Thus far, Mr Combe being "balanced" against "divines and moralists," these last apparently "*must* kick the beam." But the Goliath, with all his enormous weight, meets with a second David, sling in hand.

As the author has been "throughout tracing feelings and consciousnesses in men which point to some spiritual object,"—he cannot "suppose that we can provide for all the necessities of human beings, or set them altogether right, by treating them as creatures possessing a

stomach, a liver, and a brain." "It is, of course," he adds, "an obvious and familiar theory that these consciousnesses are secreted in the stomach, the liver, and the brain." And he is "quite willing that any one should hold that theory, and should try to work it out." He believes, as usual, that such an inquirer "will do much good,"—because light will be thrown on "the connexion of these bodily functions with the thoughts and moral state of human beings,"—and also because he will be himself "convinced that this scheme must fail." "When he has got all priests and traditions out of his way, he is only beginning" his task. "He must get the thoughts and convictions which have helped most to raise and civilise human society out of his way also: if he does not, they will perplex and torment him perpetually." For this end "he must persecute. The inconvenient consciousnesses which do not let the physical constitution act freely and healthily, will have to be prohibited." (Pp. 217–219.)

Possibly a disciple of Mr Combe might object to this *argumentum in invidiam*, as not touching the merits of the question; and even an opponent of that writer might somewhat question its fairness. That infidelity—materialism—is essentially intolerant,—that when it becomes fanatical it is more intolerant than any other bigotry,—may be proved on other grounds. But Mr Combe might have a plausible defence against the charge; he might ask how the theory of a universal law of love is less



intolerant than the theory of physical laws. What is meant, however, is clear. The author holds that "the feelings and consciousness which point to some spiritual object," cannot be resolved into physical laws, and are themselves ineradicable.

From the champion of the Physical constitution of man, the author turns to the champion of the Moral. He "honours Butler, and owes much to his discourses on *Human Nature*." But "there are causes which give the exclusive believers in a physical constitution,—immeasurably inferior as they may be to him,—a very decided advantage over him." He mentions three. In the first place, "The physiologist speaks confidently of some facts or laws which he has ascertained. As Butler is commonly interpreted, he assumes all moral principles to depend merely on probable evidence." This may be doubted; but to proceed. In the second place, physical evils, such as "certain diseases of the body," can be traced to their causes, either physical or moral; and these causes may be directly cured, or prudently avoided. "But when our social affections and our self-love are diseased, it does not appear that Butler has pointed out any satisfactory method of setting them right." And thirdly, even Mackintosh, almost an "excessive" admirer of Butler, "has complained, that while he is bold and clear in asserting the fact of a conscience, and its right to dominion, he is timid and hesitating in affirming what it is, and how its prerogatives are to be exercised;"



a just complaint, according to the author. "Every practical student of Butler is putting the question, 'This faculty belongs to my nature, then:—What, to *me*? Is the conscience *mine*? Do *I* govern it, or does it govern *me*?' The school-doctor may dismiss this difficulty with great indifference. For the living man, everything is involved in the answer to it." (Pp. 220–223.)

The author refers to one of the finest passages in Mackintosh's noble Dissertation, in which, with consummate ability, he analyses the supremacy of conscience, and places it on an impregnable basis. The passage, however,—which every one should consult,—does not naturally suggest the question supposed to be put by "every practical student of Butler." Nor is it very apparent that the question is either a necessary or a fair one. No careful and candid reader of Butler can well doubt that he might have somewhat resented it. His doctrine surely is, that conscience is *de jure*, if not *de facto*, the governor in and over the man. There is more force in the author's second objection, which indeed is the main one. Butler does not sufficiently recognise the signs of ruin in man's moral constitution; nor does he adequately discuss the nature of the repair required. How far the author succeeds better,—is now to be seen. Having disposed of Combe and of Butler, he has the field now to himself.

"The great facts to which Butler bore so brave a witness, cannot be explained, while we regard them

*merely* as facts in man's nature." "They imply an ascent out of that nature, a necessity in man to acknowledge that which is above it, that which is above himself." In pursuance of this thought, the author proposes to shew how "the difficulties which beset the most full and masterly explanation that can be given of these facts, gradually disappear;" and how "theology is the protector and basis of morality and humanity;"—of morality, it may be presumed, as elevated by Butler; of humanity as developed by Combe. And "the word REGENERATION" gives the key-note.

"To many it seems to import a principle inconsistent with that of Butler." If a man requires to be regenerated, "how can human nature in itself be that good thing which Butler would have us believe it to be?" Must not Butler contradict the Scriptures on this point, "and our hearts, which confess the Scriptures to be true, and ourselves to be evil?" He "is glad" when this is asked by a person who reverences both the Bible and Butler; sorry when it is asked by one "who wishes to prove Butler wrong." Of this last he says "that in his eagerness not to twist the Bible into conformity with Butler's notions, he will twist it into conformity with his own." By all means let both the Word of God and the great human moralist be revered, each in due measure. It will be found that the more the Word of God is revered unreservedly, the more intelligent will be the restricted reverence felt for the moralist.

In dealing with the question as to the apparent inconsistency of the doctrine of Regeneration with Butler's views, the author contrasts two meanings of the word.

1. "Regeneration *may* mean the substitution, in certain persons, at some given moment (say in the ordinance of baptism, or at a crisis called conversion), of a nature specially bestowed upon them, for the one which belongs to them as ordinary human beings. No doubt it has this meaning for a great many Protestants, as well as Romanists; no doubt this meaning mixes with another, in some of the purest and noblest hearts to be found in either communion." (P. 224.) No doubt, moreover, evangelical divines in particular are thus 'damned with faint praise.'

Paul describes some '*teachers of the law*' as '*understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*' It is but charity to think that when the author wrote these sentences he was in that predicament; otherwise he is liable to a far graver charge. Probably, even Romanists would disclaim the notion ascribed to them. Whatever change they may hold to be effected in the ordinance of baptism, the advocates of baptismal regeneration, in its most literal sense, do not hold the substitution of one nature for another to be that change. And as to Protestants,—could the author really look an evangelical friend and brother-clergyman in the face, and coolly say,—unless it were by way of harmless pleasantry and banter,—'Dear sir, do you not believe that in certain

persons, at a crisis which you call conversion, a nature specially bestowed upon them is substituted for the one which belongs to them as ordinary human beings?’ Nay,—his somewhat startled and half-amused fellow-collegian might reply,—if you seriously imagine that we absurd and extravagant evangelicals believe such stuff as that, I can set your mind at rest on that score. If you think that regeneration has this meaning for us, either pure or undiluted, or mixed with another,—though what other could mix with it I can hardly see,—it is a mere mistake. I can assure you that we thoroughly agree with yourself in the opinion that “such a doctrine of regeneration is quite incompatible” with Butler’s doctrine, and indeed with common sense. Nay, more, we would very much agree with yourself as to the meaning to be attached to the word, if we rightly understand your own definition of it. For you say:—

2. “Regeneration *may* mean the renovation or restitution of that which has fallen into decay, the repair of an edifice according to the ground plan and design of the original architect.” Let that be its meaning. “It is obvious that *such* a signification need not in the least contradict Butler’s idea of a human constitution, but might remarkably illustrate it.” So far good. But the author immediately adds:—“There being a certain constitution intended for man by his Creator, and certain influences about him or within him which weakened or undermined it, the Author of the work might look

lovingly upon it, and devise measures for counteracting those influences, and bringing it forth in its fulness and order. Some such theological complement of his moral system we may suppose gave coherency and satisfaction to the mind of Butler himself." (Pp. 225, 226.) This second description of regeneration is surely an understatement, as compared with the definition which makes regeneration mean "the renovation or restitution of that which has fallen into decay." Is the "decay" nothing more than "certain influences about man or within him which weaken or undermine the constitution intended for him by his Creator?" Is "the renovation or restitution" nothing more than "devising measures for counteracting those influences, and bringing it forth in its fulness and order?"

3. A difficulty here occurs,—Is Regeneration, in the meaning which divines attach to the word, the future hope of individuals and of the race,—or is it a present possession also, at least in part? Theologians hold that it is both. "They contend that there is something already obtained by Christ, for those who will receive it." "And the words 'birth' and 'generation,' which they find recurring so frequently in Scripture, do, they contend, suggest another thought than that which the restoration of an edifice suggests. They must indicate a life communicated from a Father." And "for the full interpretation of the doctrine" respecting the communication of this life,—as implying apparently even

something more than "the renovation or restitution of that which has fallen into decay,"—"they refer," and the author accepts the reference, "to the 3d chapter of St John's Gospel." (P. 227.)

"Three views of Regeneration" are before us. The first is "directly opposed to Butler's doctrine of a moral constitution of man." The second is "compatible with it, but scarcely according with the exact language of Scripture." The third "promises something like a kingdom or constitution to man hereafter, but seems to make the existence of a spiritual society at present rather an anomaly and an exception among human societies." But "if we may take Christ's own exposition, if we assume him to be the Regenerator of humanity, a light seems to fall on all these different aspects of the theological doctrine; we need not despair of their being reconciled." These things the author says, after dealing with the dialogue of our Lord with Nicodemus. (Pp. 230, 231.) It is convenient to have them in view at the outset.

"From the very letter of the Evangelist," a "humble reader perceives, that the birth is from above; that a Divine Spirit is the author of it; that it is the birth of a spirit; that it is the condition of entering a kingdom; that it has something to do with Baptism." Here are five discoveries made by the "humble reader," out of four verses (John iii. 3-6). He may be relieved of two of them, the third and the fifth. There is not a



word about "the birth of a spirit." And there is no allusion to baptism. To be born of water, is explained as meaning, according to Old Testament phraseology, to be born of the Spirit. But the water of baptism is not admissible here. The three remaining truths are, 1, that the birth is from above,—that it is a new birth; 2, that it is a birth effected by the Spirit; and 3, that it is the condition of entering a kingdom. And in fact these three may be reduced to one, when it is the nature of regeneration that is considered. It is to be born of the Spirit.

But the "humble reader" "suspects that the latter part of the conversation" "cannot be separated from the former part." This latter part (verses 13-21) is concerning, 1, "the Son of man who came down from heaven and is in heaven;" 2, "the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness;" 3, "the love of God to the world in sending his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life;" and 4, "the light which is come into the world, the condemnation which consists in loving the darkness." The leading idea here also is one; the love typified in the brazen serpent, and manifested in the sending of the only-begotten Son. (Pp. 227, 228.)

Several "bewildering" questions here occur, about baptism, the kingdom, heaven, and the Son of man being said to be in this heaven, even while he is upon earth. But chiefly they are these three: 1, "Why



should the exaltation of the Son of man be referred to in *this* connexion, all-important as it may be in reference to the doctrine of redemption, or the expiation of sins? ” —2, “ Why is God’s love to the world brought into a passage which seems to speak expressly of the condition of those who are ”—rather, who are to be— “ separated from the world? ”—3, “ Is not the condemnation of men this, that they do not partake of this divine and spiritual birth? Why is it declared to be that they love darkness rather than light? ” (P. 228.)

All these questions resolve themselves into one,—What has the discovery of the love of God to men,—as declared in Christ and by Christ,—to do with the change which must be wrought in man, in order that he may enter into the kingdom of God? Perhaps this is what the author means when he says that “ disagreements arise from the answers which are given to these questions; ” “ each of us being disposed to fix on some one of our Lord’s statements, as that to which he shall refer all the rest; ” and when he adds that we must have “ a centre ” for our thoughts to “ revolve ” round,—and that it is better “ to find ” such a centre than to “ choose it, and so create a system for ourselves. ” The centre and the system he thus adjusts.

“ God himself is the centre here. The love with which he loved the world, is that to which our Lord is leading us. If we learn from him what that love is, what it has designed, what it has accomplished, we shall

be in a better condition to apprehend all that he is teaching us respecting the birth from above."

"Starting from this point, then," we trace this love in its course. It "has manifested itself in setting forth the only-begotten Son, not merely as the author of forgiveness, but as the very ground and source of man's eternal life." "The cross is the exhibition of God's love." It is also "the exhibition of the true and perfect Man." "Looking up to the cross"—"the man does not perish by the bite of the serpent,"—which is the "spirit of selfishness continually separating him from God and his brethren." "He sees that eternal life which was with the Father, and which in the Divine Word is manifested to us; he becomes an inheritor of it." And what he perceives is real. "The Son of man," "who is in heaven," even "while he is walking on earth, has come down to establish the kingdom of heaven upon earth, to unite earth and heaven in himself,"—"to claim men as spiritual beings capable of this spiritual life, inheritors of this spiritual kingdom. Baptism declares this to be their proper and divine constitution in Christ. All who receive it claim the kingdom which God has declared to be theirs. They take up their rights as spiritual beings. He bestows his Spirit upon them that they may enjoy these rights; that they may be as much born into the light of heaven, into the light of God's countenance, as the child is born out of the womb into the light of the sun." (Pp. 228-230.)

Such, according to the author, is regeneration. First, the love of God is manifested in Christ, as the source of eternal life,—the destroyer of the spirit of selfishness in man,—the uniter of heaven and earth in himself. He thus establishes the kingdom of heaven upon earth, and claims men as spiritual beings, inheritors of the kingdom. They, being baptized, claim their rights. And God bestows his Spirit upon them that they may enjoy these rights. And this is as truly a birth as the coming forth of the child out of the womb. One disposed to be minutely critical might say that it is rather like letting in the light and life of day upon the child still in the womb, and making him feel there as if he were abroad and at large, under the open eye of heaven. Our Lord says very solemnly ;—‘ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ Before that birth, whatever it may be, he has no more interest in the kingdom of God than the unborn child has in the world into which it has not yet entered.

But apart from this, has not the author evaded the real question? That question is not respecting the connexion between the inward work of the Spirit in regeneration and the outward manifestation of the love of God in redemption,—upon which our Lord’s discourse sheds a flood of light. But what is regeneration? What change, or renovation of the moral nature of man does it imply? So far as appears from the author’s somewhat obscure multiplying of words,—it is not that

I am so renewed as to become what I was not before—but that I am so enlightened as to apprehend what I was before. It is not that the ruin is repaired, but that it discovers itself to be no ruin. It is not that a new life is communicated, but that an old life is recognised. It may be a new light,—a new experience,—a new revelation; but it is not a new creation; it is not a new birth. The new birth demands the proclamation of the love of God, as our Lord most graciously proclaims it—that love which provides a Saviour to be lifted up upon the cross. But it demands also an immediate work of the Holy Spirit in and upon the moral nature of man, in order that the conscience may reassert effectually its right both to command and to condemn. There is light from above to shew the love of God in Christ. There is power from above to make the heart willing. Enlightened and renewed, the man enters into the kingdom of God.

Having worked out what he considers the true idea of regeneration, the author now applies it to the “different aspects of the theological doctrine” which he had previously noticed; “not despairing of their being reconciled.” He begins with Butler. He thinks that Butler’s “ethical principle” may now be accepted and applied.

First, Mackintosh’s objection, as the author understands it, “is taken away. The name, Conscience, would seem to import, not a power which rules in us,

but rather our perception and recognition of some power very near us, which has a claim on our obedience."

Dr Chalmers has admirably shewn that Butler's doctrine respecting conscience may be turned to most important account in natural theology. "The felt supremacy" of a moral sense within, points to and proves the actual supremacy of a moral Governor above. The existence of conscience, with its acknowledged sovereignty, in man,—implies a law, and a Lawgiver and Judge over man. This is a cogent argument; but it is an argument which bears, not upon man's regeneration, but upon his need of being regenerated. "If I am entitled to say, 'There is a Lord over my inner man to whom I am bound, apart from whom I cannot exercise the functions which belong to me as a man, according to the law of my being,'—conscience can be restored to its simple and natural signification; it does not demand sovereignty, but pays homage." So far the author seems to mean, what Dr Chalmers means, that the sovereignty of conscience over the other parts of our constitution really proceeds upon its owning, as paramount over all, the sovereignty of God. But then immediately after, he speaks of that to which conscience pays homage as "a supernatural government established within us." And still more plainly he adds,—"I feel that I am not confessing Christ before men"—"if I do not say that it is of him my conscience speaks, that I am under his government, in his kingdom. Nor dare I hide from

any man the good news that *he* too is a subject of this kingdom, that the Regenerator of humanity is his Lord and Master." (Pp. 231-233.)

This must mean, first, that what conscience recognises is a supernatural government in me,—the government of a lord and master in me; and secondly, that conscience recognises or discovers this lord and master in me to be the Regenerator of humanity. As to the first, is it not a defective view of what conscience indicates? Is it not the instinctive belief of a lord and master out of me,—above me,—before me,—that conscience prompts? It is not a lord over my inner man, establishing a supernatural government within me, that my conscience causes me to own, but a lord over my inner man, over myself,—confronting me,—reckoning with me,—compelling me to plead at his tribunal and listen to his sentence. And then, as to the other point, neither reason nor Scripture can ever make my conscience recognise in this lord and master, as such,—as the instinct of conscience itself points him out,—the Regenerator either of humanity, or of myself. On the contrary, my conscience must protest to the last against his being so, unless he himself shall tell me of some power or process,—quite distinct from any that my own conscience could ever suggest,—by which my moral nature may be changed. The truth is, my conscience as to this matter says nothing to me at all of regeneration; it speaks exclusively of guilt, pollution, condemnation, and a



great Being to whom I am accountable. Regeneration must be found for me, not in me. And it must be something more than the owning of "a supernatural government established within me;" it must be a provision for so renovating my whole inner man as to bring it into harmony with that government. The lord and master whom my conscience owns, may be the Regenerator; but it is because he presents himself to me in a new character, and performs in me a new work.

Butler admits "the possible effects of superstition in perverting the decrees of conscience;" and the author's principle explains and prevents the mischief. "Till the true Lord of the conscience has made himself known to it, of necessity it must go about seeking rest and finding none." It "will bow to any impostor," or "false king," under whose influence it will "become beclouded in its judgments," and exercise "a cruel tyranny over its vassals." "It may prescribe outrages on physical rules and on the social affections," not to be tolerated. This, of course, is true,—as witness infanticide, the Suttee, and a thousand other abominations. It is, in fact, a truism in moral science; and Christian moralists have usually found the remedy in the knowledge of the true God as he has revealed himself in his Word. They have held that the conscience, like every other part of man's constitution, has suffered by the Fall: that it is apt to be warped and clouded; and that its testimony within becomes true and strong only when it is enlight-



ened by the testimony of God from without and from above, as that testimony is contained in the Holy Scriptures. This is at least a plainer and more intelligible, if not a surer and safer statement, than the author's way of putting it:—"If we believe that Christ is the ruler of this conscience, how beautifully the distinction of St Paul between the flesh and the spirit would interpret the mystery of his divine government; what a solid basis would it lay for ethics and practical education!" The interpretation of this divine government which is thus to uphold the fabric of morals, would seem to be,—that there are punishments, and fears of punishment, "needful for that evil nature in us, which is always seeking to break loose from law, and which would reduce us to mere animals:"—but that "the Christ, the true bridegroom of man's spirit, is ever drawing it towards himself,—is holding out to it freedom from evil, and the knowledge of himself as its high reward. Owning Him, the man rises out of dark superstitions, out of immoral practices; he recognises the fitness of all God's arrangements in the physical and moral world; he claims for the body, as well as the soul, a redemption from all which corrupts and degrades it." (P. 234.)

There is, then, an evil nature in me, for which punishments and fears of punishment are needful. Interpreted by the light of former essays, the evil nature may mean nothing more than my liability to be drawn into evil by the evil spirit; and the punishments, actual or

feared, may be those arrangements of God in the physical and moral world, whose fitness I ought to recognise, and whose fixedness I cannot come across without loss and damage. But whatever the evil nature in me may be, I ask,—is it to be renewed, changed, made really different from what it was before? To tell me that my spirit is married to Christ, that he is drawing it towards himself,—that owning him, I am free, risen, redeemed,—is not to answer my question at all. I ask about that evil nature in me which, to say the least of it, is counteracting this drawing of my spirit towards himself on the part of its Bridegroom, and interfering with this owning of him on my part,—I ask—Is that to undergo any alteration? For if not, it is idle to tantalise me with the mere idea of regeneration, a new birth, a new creation,—which my enlightened conscience makes me feel that I sorely need. It is ‘keeping the word of promise to the ear and breaking it to the sense.’

The reconciliation of self-love and social, is another problem of Butler’s. But this also is explained by “the principle that Christ is the Regenerator of humanity.” “I am certain that I have no self that I can love— . . . unless I am the member of a body. I am certain that I cannot be the member of a body consisting of persons, unless I am myself a person; that I cannot love another person unless I do also love myself.” So the author states the difficulty. He meets it thus:—“Bring in the belief of the one Head and Brother of each man, the

one Centre of society, and that great moral contradiction is felt to be a great moral necessity ; one which we can welcome and rejoice in, and act upon." (P. 234, 235).

To some it may appear that our Lord's solution is clearer. Having rehearsed the first and great commandment, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind,'—he added, 'And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Let there be supreme love to God, and "self-love and social become the same." But in order to this subordination of the creature to the Creator, a man must be really born of the Spirit.

From Butler, the author passes again to Combe. The disciples of Combe may still complain of Butler as "dealing only with probabilities and chances." "You may pretend that you have given certainty to what is doubtful in his speculations, by adding to them the words of Scripture." But you have only given us your interpretation of those words. Such is their complaint. "It is but a guess sustaining a guess."

In reply, the author confesses and laments certain admissions of Butler, which might seem to mean that he wanted men to decide and act for eternity upon a calculation of chances. He refers to Newman's having overthrown, as a Romanist, his own previous theory which carried that idea to a sad extreme. And he very ably vindicates Butler's process of induction, and that kind of evidence generally, as giving results equally certain,

in the region of mind and morals, with the conclusions reached in the study of material nature. He then explains the use to be made of the Bible in connexion with these results. It is itself "a book in which God is teaching his creatures induction by setting them an example of it; nothing is taught there as it is in the Koran, by mere decree; everything by life and experiment." Certainly, what God teaches in the Bible is not for the most part taught oracularly, but rather through real, living, and personal histories, on which oracular light is shed. And revelation must be received as "interpreting the facts of human life," and tracing to their "source the difficulties of human speculation." "Accepting it for this purpose, we do not put our own sense upon it." What then? How do we use it? "We go to it in our great necessity, to see whether it can give us the help we need;" not "putting our own sense upon it," but in our helplessness interrogating it. And "if that which was a presumption before, becomes clothed with a new force, illuminated with a new brightness; if it comes back to me, stripped of all that was merely my own, and yet I recognise it as more mine than ever,—I do not know what the reason can ask for besides, to quiet it, and satisfy it." This, the author thinks, "the belief of Christ as the Regenerator of humanity does for all the questionings and demands of suffering human beings," as well as "for the speculations of the faithful moral student." (Pp. 236-240.)

Surely a distinction is here overlooked;—the distinction between the *data* and the *desiderata* of man's moral nature, as a sound induction ascertains them. The author's account of the function of Holy Scripture is consequently one-sided. It is quite true that much is taught in the Bible "by life and experiment,"—not perhaps everything,—but at any rate much. Studying it as a book of "life and experiment," very much as we study life and experience in ourselves and others, we find a harmony most satisfying to our reason; and are enabled to interpret many facts, and trace many speculations to their source in the deep heart of man, or of God. The great fundamental principles of our spiritual constitution,—the supremacy of conscience among the rest,—are thus invested with new force and brightness. But a sound induction brings out, not only what man is, but what man needs; and it is possible that God may be telling us in the Bible of some procedure on his part,—altogether new,—such as could never enter into the heart of man,—fitted to supply our need. In that view, the Bible must be interrogated upon the point,—whether or not it has information to give on the subject of the dealings of God, as well as the consciousnesses and experiences of man. It may have something more, and something else, to do, than to send back to me what was a presumption before, with whatever added power and purity a divine record of life and experiment may impart. I search it that I may know if it has. And

here, I must to the best of my ability, and with what help I can get, "put my own meaning upon it." I must interpret it, as I would interpret the letter or message of a friend. I find that it tells me of a new birth,—of regeneration. I examine what that may fairly be held to mean, not according to any previous presumption of mine, but according to the ordinary rules by which language is explained. And I rejoice to ascertain that it is a new work of God, in and upon my moral nature, repairing, renovating it. There is nothing inconsistent with the facts which a sound induction has ascertained to be facts of my moral nature; but there is something different,—something which fits into them. There is the discovery from above and from without of a remedy for a disease felt within,—the supply of a want under the sense of which I inwardly groan.

The evidence of what he has been saying to the disciples of Combe, the author draws from the very evils to which they are accustomed to point in the Church and in Christendom.

1. Faith in "the fact that Christ is the Regenerator of humanity," gives to the Church her true elevation. The author charges Romanists with "having undervalued the Church." He contrasts the mischief which the Church has done, when, forgetting its true position as God's witness, it has assumed to be his delegate and so to lord it in the world,—with the good it has nevertheless done as "a civiliser and educator of human beings."



And he thus "explains the facts." "I find men who have acted in the faith of God having regenerated the world in Christ,—have been the great instruments of good to the world. And I find that men—possibly these very men—when they have acted on the opposite hypothesis, when they have behaved as if it was their business to make human beings something else than God has made them, have produced all manner of mischief and confusion." Doubtless it must be so. In so far as Popery, or any other Church tyranny, has tried to make men unnatural,—unnaturally recluse,—unnaturally chaste,—unnaturally spiritual,—unnaturally moral,—having a law of casuistry above the law of God;—the result has been bad saints,—bad monks and nuns,—bad kings and subjects,—bad parents and children,—and in short, all kinds of social disorganisation. Of course the author cannot mean to charge these consequences against the doctrine that by regeneration human beings are made again to be what God made man at the first. And he surely cannot intend to restrict the credit of being "civilisers and educators of human beings" to those who have believed that "God has regenerated the world in Christ." (Pp. 241–244.)

2. And yet one would almost think so, on reading his reproof to Protestants. "Romanists and Greeks have not believed that Christ came into the world to regenerate all human society, all the forms of life." Hence "a secret Manicheism has gained strength, and



must gain strength every hour, till the idea of a regenerated humanity supersedes and extinguishes it." "What then are Protestants doing," "when they deny the renewal and regeneration of society in Christ; when they insist that we may not claim for our children the glory and privilege of the new birth, of being members of Christ; that this is the special distinction of a few persons who have been brought to know that they possess it?" (Pp. 245, 246.)

Now this is very smart,—more smart than civil. It is very adroit, too,—more adroit than candid. Two things are here ingeniously confounded; "the belief that Christ came into the world to regenerate all human society, all the forms of life,—all civil order, all domestic relationships;"—and "the idea of a regenerated humanity." If the author intends to say that "Protestants," demurring to this latter idea, are to be held as disowning the former belief,—he can hardly be acquitted of the charge of being, whether ignorantly or not, 'an accuser of the brethren.' Protestants do not "deny the renewal and regeneration of society in Christ," if by that is meant that "he came into the world to regenerate all human society, all forms of life." They hold strongly that Christ has declared all civil order, all domestic relationships, human flesh, common food, marriage and the marriage feast, to be intimately connected with him. They repudiate the Romanist idea of setting up a so-called religious profession in

contrast with ordinary forms of life, as if it could be more sacred or more Christian. They, as well as the author, regard it as a secret Manicheism. But surely to regenerate, as, wherever the influence of his gospel is felt, Christ does regenerate,—human nature in all its parts, human society in all its institutions and relations, is a different thing from regenerating the moral nature of men; although this last may be the means of the other. And it may be fairly left for decision to the common sense of men, whether “the idea of a regenerated humanity,” or the belief that God, by his Holy Spirit, renews the hearts of men, one by one,—making them loveable and loving,—is after all the lever best fitted for elevating “all forms of life, all civil order, all domestic relationships.” As to the author’s hit, when he would make “Protestants” say “that the new-birth is the special distinction of a few persons who have been brought to know that they possess it,” it is scarcely worth while to say that to possess the new-birth and to know that I possess it, are not the same thing; far less is it my being brought to know that I possess it that procures for me this distinction. It may be enough to retort the question, Of what avail is the regeneration which he himself describes as universal, unless men are brought to know that they possess it? And it may be lawful to express a doubt whether, unless all language and all experience be altered, men will easily be brought to know and realize their regeneration, without a change

being undergone by them personally, in their whole moral and spiritual nature.

3. The author thinks that the view which he advocates may so far commend itself to the disciples of Combe, as it holds physical nature, not less than that which is spiritual and moral, to be embraced in the regeneration. The "Protestant" doctrine on this subject is undoubtedly favourable to physical inquiry, and the fullest acknowledgment of the physical laws. According to that doctrine, the entire nature of man, all social relations, and indeed the earth itself, must be viewed as capable of renovation. To regard all as already regenerated, is another opinion, and one which in the end may lead as much to acquiescence as to struggle. But there can be no dissent from the author's closing remark here;—"we ought to feel that all God's judgments by fever and cholera, are judgments for neglect of his physical laws, but that *they* will not be obeyed till men obey his moral laws, by ceasing to live to themselves, by feeling that it is their business to care for their fellows and for the earth." Only let a qualification be allowed,—that to the individuals themselves who suffer, these are not always or necessarily judgments for neglect of any law of God, physical or moral; and a supplement,—that this obedience to the moral laws of God, which is the only security for obedience to his physical laws, may imply a moral and spiritual change, somewhat more personal to the indi-

vidual than "the idea of a regenerated humanity." (Pp. 246, 247.)

4. The bearing of these inquiries upon "the working classes," who "are discussing the question, whether there is a God,"—is a subject of vast importance. The author thinks that the doctrine of an actual and universal regeneration of humanity,—“a social as well as an individual regeneration ;”—the assertion “that God has regenerated us, and has given us a simple sign and pledge that he has done so ;”—might, “in time, bring some of them to feel that the Church was their friend and deliverer, not as they now, with great excuse, consider it, the bitterest of their foes.” He anticipates a round of persecution for any one “speaking and acting upon this principle.” “High churchmen” “low churchmen,”—“priests, monarchs, nobles,” and “those who denounce all three,”—“those who say you must reform the individual before you reform society,”—“those who talk of reforming society, as the only way of reforming the individual,”—“those who wish to keep things as they are,”—and “the whole new school of philosophers and reformers,” whose “greeting to one another is, ‘Christ is *not* risen ;’”—all will be upon him. In this universal war against him, “his only hope of that which shall be, lies in his acknowledgment of that which has been and is.” This makes him neither a Whig, “compromising between the past and the present, between order and freedom ;” nor a Radical,

if that implies his thinking, "that the world which is to arise out of the wreck of that in which we are living," is to be "one of which some other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is to be the king." (Pp. 247-250.) He will not consent to sever the future from the past and present. And he is right. But at the same time, in entire consistency with what he says, and says well, on these subjects,—and indeed for the very purpose of shewing how the past and present work out the future,—it is most important to maintain that regeneration is a process now going forward; that, in the first instance, it is a change of the moral and spiritual nature of individual men, one after another, fitting them for the kingdom of God; and that through this renewal of individual men, and in connexion with it, there is in progress a regeneration of society,—in its families, its communities, its laws and customs, its relations and institutions,—such as may warrant the expectation of seeing manifested in due time, 'the new heavens and the new earth, whercin dwelleth righteousness.' This surely is a ground of hope and a spur to exertion for which "the idea of a regenerated humanity" is scarcely an adequate substitute.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE EXALTATION OF THE REDEEMER TO THE OFFICE OF RULER  
AND JUDGE.—ESSAYS XI. AND XII.

### ESSAY XI.—ON THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

“HUMANITY is continually longing and striving to ascend above itself into a mysterious heaven. The Greeks, with their creative faculty, expressed this truth in various modes and symbols. The poor Jew could think only of an actual body ascending into some actual heaven. The Christian Church has accepted the Jewish dogma; but with a feeling of the restraint which it imposes. The notion of a present Christ alternates in her teachings with that of One who has gone away. The doctrine of transubstantiation has represented and perpetuated the contradiction. Protestants have tried to rid themselves of it; but cannot do so, unless they are content to receive the kernel without the shell, to take the idea of the ascension, and to cast away the story of it.” Such is the language which the author puts into the mouth of certain idealists, who are the respondents in this Essay. (Pp. 254, 255.)

He admits in substance their representation of the

Jewish mind, especially as formed by the Jewish "laws, institutions, traditions." He holds, at the same time, that the sense of an actually present God and of their interest in him must have been strong in many hearts; strongest in times of trouble; and that the ordinary teaching of the scribes or doctors of the law could not meet it. But the teaching of Christ did. He was one of themselves. He spoke to them of a Father who knew them and whom they might know,—from whom he came. He drew them "from a world which they looked upon with their eyes, into an unseen world which another eye that he was opening must take in; yet a world which was intimately united to the one they were walking in, which gave the forms of that world a distinctness they had never had before." Thus he spoke to them of the kingdom of heaven; and "when he wielded the powers of his kingdom, they felt more and more that he governed the secret heart of nature and of man."

The teaching went on, in spite of all their prejudices, "kindling in them a new feeling of humanity." There was danger of the Teacher being idolised. How does he meet this danger? He owns Peter's confession, and rebukes mildly his expostulation. He is transfigured on the Mount. He comes "down into the crowd about the boy who had fits. Thus a sense of inward glory belonging to him, which spirit might apprehend, but the eye could not, was awakened in them; while they saw him crushing and humbling all that they



looked upon, all that they could make an excuse for idolatry. At last the humiliation became complete."

"The night before his passion," two things happened. He spoke of his going to his Father, and of their seeing him no more; he spoke of it as "a day of bliss to them, which should succeed a night of sorrow." "He took bread and wine, saying—Take, eat,—drink ye all of this. This is my body broken, and my blood shed for the remission of sins." "His body was there; within a few hours it was" in the "sepulchre."

That he would "rise out of it," they did not believe; but when "he did rise, this seemed the explanation of all that he had done, and said, and been." "If there was such a Son of God and Son of man, as he had led them to believe there was, then it seemed to them strange and monstrous that he should die, but natural and reasonable that he should rise. And soon they seem to have felt it scarcely less natural and necessary that he should ascend to Him from whom they believed that he had come. They relate, in a few simple words, how they arrived at that conviction, how he educated them into it." How was that? "He appeared to them while they were met together, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews. He shewed them his hands and his side; he ate with them; he vanished out of their sight; he breathed on them; he commanded them to go and baptize all nations; he said, '*All power is given unto me in heaven and earth*;' he said, '*Lo, I am*

*with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'"*  
(Pp. 259-262.)

This is a most imperfect summary of a long passage in which there is much that is not only extremely beautiful, but valuable and true. The yearning of many a poor Jewish heart, under the dry teaching of the Rabbis, for some better and more satisfying food than the husks of traditionary formalism;—the intense longing felt by common men, especially in seasons of sadness, for such a real and actual personal acquaintance with Jehovah as sustained amid their trials the saints and worthies of the olden time;—"their hearts, not their eyes, crying out for the living God;"—the glad welcome given to him who went about among them 'speaking a word in season to the weary;'—their worship of him, awed into a better feeling by the 'glory which he received from the Father,' and by his own submission to suffering;—these are topics inviting longer discussion than can now be given. The points particularly to be observed as bearing upon the Ascension, in the author's view of it, are;—on the one hand, what the Lord taught the disciples to expect on the night before he died;—and on the other hand, what he taught them during the forty days after his resurrection concerning the way in which the expectations he had raised were to be fulfilled. These are, as it were, the *thesis* and the *antithesis*; answering to one another. As to the first point, the *thesis*, he held out the prospect

of his going to the Father as fitted to reconcile them to the idea of their not seeing him; and he encouraged them to look for his being with them in a feast in which they were to feed upon his body and blood. As to the second point, the *antithesis*, he familiarized them with the idea, that though not seen by them, he was still capable of being present with them, in the very body in which they had beheld him suffering. To accustom them to this belief, he for a season continued to make himself now and then actually visible,—appearing, they knew not how,—disappearing, they knew not how,—yet proving by infallible signs that he was the very Jesus who had died. Thereafter, having, as the head of a universal kingdom, given them their commission—and his inspiration, his blessing,—he ceased to present himself any more to their bodily eye;—still however assuring them, ‘Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.’

The plain import of all this seems to be that the mere invisibility of Christ explains and harmonizes both his presence with the Father and his presence with us. He is with the Father in the body, though we do not see him; he may be with us in the body, though we do not see him. His being with the Father in heaven in the body is the exaltation of humanity; his being with us on earth still in the body, though we see him not even while we feed upon him, realizes to us that exaltation in our present earthly state. And this is the

ascension. But perhaps it is best not to anticipate the author's own account.

It is not a little remarkable, however, that, professing "to repeat their story,"—a story which, "if it sounds unnatural, inconsistent, grotesque, to any," he refuses "to make less so by translating it out of their words into his,"—the author omits all mention of what the apostles themselves actually tell concerning the fact of which they were eye-witnesses. "Their story" is, that they saw Jesus on Mount Olivet parted from them and carried up into heaven, that a cloud received him out of their sight, that they saw two angels and heard them say, 'This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' According to that story, the fact is this;—that Christ in the body has left this earth altogether, 'the heavens having received him until the time of the restitution of all things;' that Christ in the body is where Enoch and Elijah are, where the saints who rose on the morning of his own resurrection are. He may have appeared occasionally,—he has appeared to Stephen, to Saul, to John in Patmos,—in the glory in which he appeared with Moses and Elias on the Mount. He may and he does manifest his gracious presence, by his word and Spirit, in the Eucharist and always, to them that love him and keep his words. But his bodily presence is not now enjoyed by the Church, and cannot be, any more than the bodily presence of Elijah;—unless the human

nature of the Son of God is invested with the attribute of ubiquity. The author altogether, and all throughout, sets aside the historical narrative of the ascension; at all events, to use his own expression elsewhere, he would require to be "brought to book" upon the subject. He finds it more convenient to assume that the ascension from Mount Olivet made no difference whatever in the position of Christ with reference to the apostles; and then to give an account of what their views and sentiments must have been, on that assumption.

"They felt, 'This Lord of ours is actually related to us and to the Father, as he was before he was crucified. His body is the very body which he had then. But we are not henceforth to see him often in that body. Our intercourse with him is not to be helped or hindered by the eye. . . . It must be—as he told us it would be—henceforth awful intercourse with the Father through him, so that as in him God has stooped to us, in him we may ascend to God.' " (Pp. 259-263.)

If any object that this "is ideal language,—translating Hebrew into Greek,"—the author's reply is that "the minds of these dull Galileans *were* idealized, spiritualized." And he shews how. "A person whom they knew, with whom they felt that they were inseparably, eternally united, had gone out of this world; to what place they knew not, nor cared to know; but certainly to his Father, certainly to Him with whom he had always been one, with whom he had come to make

them one, whom he had declared and proved to be their Father as well as his Father." It was thus "demonstrated" to them "that they were spirits having bodies, not bodies into which a certain ethereal particle, called spirit, was infused." As "spirits having bodies" they "conversed with God" and "with one another," and could "feel, suffer, hope, with all men, with the whole universe." "They could claim the dignity of spirits, because they were one with him who had redeemed the body and made it spiritual. They could have fellowship with all sufferers in the body, because he had suffered and died, and was the common Lord of all. They could rise to communion with the Father of spirits; because there was One in a body who was his well-beloved Son, and who had offered himself for them." (Pp. 264, 265.)

And now "they could enter into the force of those words spoken at the Paschal supper." "They could remember how at Capernaum, he had spoken of his flesh being meat indeed, of his blood being drink indeed," of "his flesh being given for the life of the world;" how "when some were offended he said, '*The Spirit quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing*;' and how he had connected these apparent contradictions with the question, '*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*'" They therefore could receive the bread and wine in the Eucharist as "the surest pledge that they were risen with him; that



they were in his presence as much as ever ; that they had no life in themselves ; that the life of the world was in him ; that his flesh and blood were indeed the bond between the creatures and the Creator, between the creatures and one another." (P. 265.)

If it may be permitted to express somewhat more precisely what these statements appear to mean, is it not in substance this? Christ becomes invisible,—at least ordinarily invisible. But he still has a body. This body,—Christ as having this body,—is the bond between us and God,—between us and one another. Remembering and owning Christ as being with the Father with whom he has always been one,—and as the common Lord of all,—we are elevated into fellowship with his Father and his brethren;—into the fellowship which he has with his Father, and with his brethren also, as being still, though invisible, in the body. There is thus a union, a sympathy, between us as "spirits having bodies," and Christ as "having a body." To feel this, is to ascend in him to God. And of this ascension, the symbols of his body and blood are the surest pledges.

Now, according to the author's view, what really is the ascension of Christ himself? Is it anything more than his becoming invisible,—while still having a body? "He is gone out of this world," it is true. But that can mean only that "we are not henceforth to see him often in the body;" for the disciples "were in his presence



as much as ever." Nor can this refer to his divinity. As introduced in connexion with the symbols of his flesh, it must mean that we are as much as ever in the presence of Christ considered as having a body. There is really nothing but his being seen, that distinguishes Christ before his ascension from Christ after that event. There is no change of condition personal to himself. It is easy to say that we need not care to know to what place he has gone. But Christ having a body is a man, and must be in some place; and he did not himself think that his disciples would be indifferent to the question,—where he was to be when he was gone, and what he was to be doing there. He went to his Father, we are told, with whom he had always been one. True, he had always been one with his Father. But having a body, he dwelt among us, both before and after his resurrection; and we know what he was doing. Is he not in a different position now, since his ascension? Was there no change of locality, no change of condition, when in the sight of the men of Galilee, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and he was carried up into heaven?

Again, the author assigns no new office, or function, or work to Christ in connexion with his ascension. Scripture seems to speak of certain parts of his ministry, as Mediator, being the immediate consequence, and indeed the fulfilment of the very end of that event; such as, his intercession, his procuring gifts for men, his send-

ing the Holy Spirit, his ruling over all for his Church, and his appointment of means, ordinances and ministers in his Church. These, and such as these, are the particulars commonly understood to be contained in the clause of the Creed—"he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." The author makes little or nothing of that clause, although he professes to dispose of it along with the article,—“He ascended into heaven.” No theologian can deny that the “ascension into heaven” is in order to the “sitting on the right hand of God.” And that this last formula implies the exercise of certain powers and prerogatives not belonging to Christ before, can scarcely be doubted. It is true that the efficacy of all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, and received, as having the body which the Father prepared for him, is retrospective as well as prospective;—and tells by anticipation upon the characters and destinies of men, downwards from the Fall, as well as onwards to the end of time. Theology always admits this. But the question is,—Who and what is the Christ when fully unfolded,—to whom ages past have looked and ages to come must look? Who and what is he in the different stages of his being? In particular, Is he differently situated now, since his ascension, from what he was before that event? And is he,—Christ having a body,—called in consequence to different acts and exercises? If so, what are they?

The truth is, what the author discusses is not the

ascension of Christ at all, but our ascension in Christ. The ascension, as a historical fact in the experience of Christ himself, is entirely overlooked. And of necessity, the meaning and bearing of the fact, as regards the divine government over human beings, are equally overlooked. For any practical purpose, the ascension is nothing more than the resurrection, with the additional circumstance of invisibility. There is really no change in Christ's relation to us, or in our relation to him, involved in his ascending into heaven. We are somehow to identify ourselves with a human being, who is one with the Father, and who has passed unscathed through the ordeal of death;—we are to keep a feast over and upon his flesh;—and so we are to apprehend and seal our ascension, “as spirits having bodies,” to God.

It is not necessary to follow the author in detail, as he passes from the Galileans to the Greeks.

Saul of Tarsus is the chief agent here. He deals with various Gentile churches, finding different peculiarities of belief among them. Writing to the Colossians, in particular, as combining several of these peculiarities, both Greek and Oriental, he addresses to them the appeal, ‘*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*’ There are other passages in which this apostle speaks of the ascension of Christ more directly than he does in this one. But this one suits the author's purpose. “The words are generally applicable to all conditions of the

Church ;” and they “point out the source of various diseases,” and the “one remedy for them.”

“‘*If ye be risen with Christ,*’”—“the language is metaphorical, some one says.” But “Paley, who had a broad, simple, English nature,” and was “struck especially by the business-like quality of St Paul’s mind,”—“must have concluded that such passages” as this, “were not pieces of fine writing, not flourishes of rhetoric.” And Paul “could say boldly, ‘you are risen with Christ.’ ‘It is not a metaphor or fancy that you are.’” He could say so, according to the author, because he believed that God had “regenerated and restored humanity in Christ, that he had called men to claim their relation to the Father through the Son.” And upon the assumption of his believing this, Paul is made to deliver a communion-sermon, a call to the altar, which certainly might tax not a little “the business-like quality of his mind.” The object of it is to rouse men to a recognition, not of their need of regeneration, but of their actual regeneration in Christ, and to meet their sense of subjection to evil by reminding them that Christ’s flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed. “He who is at the right hand of God is not merely a spiritual being separated from you ; he is in your nature, he has taken your flesh, he has redeemed it, glorified it.” And then follows the invitation to the Eucharist, warning you not to come “as a fine, dainty, selfish epicure, to seek some special and solitary blessings for yourself,”—nor “as those who

come with cowardly prostration before a dæmon whose favour they are bribing;—but as those who have their habitation and their polity with Christ, their Representative and Intercessor ” (Pp. 269–273.)

Who the epicures and cowards here stigmatized are, the author does not say. Paley’s broad, simple, English nature would not probably have been so reserved, or so fond of inuendoes. But let that pass. There can be no doubt that Paul addresses the Colossians and others as those who are already risen and ascended with Christ. He appeals to them as being one with Christ in all the aspects of his condition,—crucified with him, buried with him, risen with him, set down with him in the heavenly places. And it is poor criticism which would resolve all this into a figure. It is reality. But it is quite as much so if I say,—these statements are true of men when they are brought individually, by a personal process of conviction and conversion, to receive and own Christ, each man for himself; as it is if I say,—they are true of universal humanity. Nay, there is far more reality in that first way of putting the case. For then, men actually do undergo changes corresponding exactly to the changes which Christ underwent. They are as real changes in their personal history as they were in his. They may be as conscious of them in their experience, as Christ was in his. According to the other view, human nature—the human nature which all possess,—shares in some mysterious manner the fortunes of the human nature

of Christ. It does so equally in the case of those who realize this, and of those who do not. Humanity as a whole is crucified, buried, risen, ascended, in Christ. Every man is so in point of fact, whether he thinks and feels so, or not. The author might say, 'Would you then make the fact depend upon the feeling? Is the feeling to make or create the fact? Is it a man's getting himself to believe that he is one with Christ that constitutes his oneness?' This is a common misrepresentation of his. The reply is simple; No. There are real changes effected by divine power in and upon men, answering to the real changes which were effected by the same power in and upon Christ. True, the changes are in the mean time moral and spiritual; but they are not the less real on that account. And it is because they are real in fact, that they can be realized by consciousness.

All this, however, the author would denounce as selfishness,—perhaps as “peeping into the ground, and muttering, to ask the aid of some familiar spirit.” Paul, in his opinion, presents the flesh and blood of Christ, not to remind men who have personally undergone a change equivalent to his death and resurrection, that they are dead with him and risen with him,—but to assure men, indiscriminately and universally, “that they are members of Christ's body, and Christ is at the right hand of God.” Taken in the first of these views, the fact that Christ in our human nature is glorified, has in it a true significancy, and enforces powerfully those very



lessons about the sacredness of the entire person,—of common life also, and common things,—which the author rightly values as among the best fruits of the doctrine of Christ's ascension. But may it not be reasonably feared that, just in proportion as you quit the idea of human beings actually undergoing a change which may be fitly called dying with Christ and rising with him,—and put instead of it the idea of human nature itself being exalted in Christ,—you take away the very foundation of those appeals to practical holiness and to the discharge of all the offices of charity, which Paul so anxiously connects with whatever he says of man's high standing in the Son of God?

The author challenges "the Greeks, with their high spirituality, to produce anything which was more spiritual," or—"with their humanity, anything which was more human,"—than the teaching of Paul, as he interprets that apostle. He charges the Church with having "lost hold of this truth of Christ's actual ascension," and "substituted a mere symbolical or ideal ascension for that." He adds that, in consequence, "the Greek notion of men rising and ascending by dint of high gifts of soul into gods, superseded the notion of the fishermen and the tent-maker, that they and the humblest men are risen with Christ, and may therefore seek those things which are above." By "the truth of Christ's actual ascension,"—he means our actual ascension,—the ascension of all men universally,—of regene-



rated humanity,—in Christ. He connects this line of observation with the previous Essay ; and repeating the statement, that “ many of the mischiefs and abominations which have tormented the Church, and made her the oppressor of mankind, arose from her disbelief in Christ as the Regenerator of man,” he proceeds to make “ some special applications,” which “ belong to the subject he is now considering.”

He contrasts two views of “ the resurrection and ascension of Christ.” He himself thinks they are “ events which could not have been otherwise, which exhibit eternal laws, which vindicate the true order and constitution of human existence.” By “ a great portion of the Church,” however, they are “ taken as merely extraordinary, anomalous events,”—“ while at the same time there has been an assurance that they were necessary to men, and that they must in some way be *pattern* events, examples of that which men are to be and to do.” This is his representation of the doctrine commonly held by “ divines ;” and it is partly correct. They do regard the resurrection and ascension of Christ as events *sui generis*. Christ is alone in his resurrection and ascension, as well as in his incarnation, obedience, and death. He sustains a character peculiar to himself. He carries forward and completes a work of salvation in which no man is or can be a partner with him. From first to last, his is a history which can belong to no other. On that very account, indeed, it is the pattern of the new

history of all who believe in his name. He enables them to enter into the experience which was his, and his alone, as their representative and substitute. They are crucified with him ; they are risen with him ;—not, however, because his death and resurrection are ordinary or necessary events, according to the constitution of human existence, as it naturally is ; but because they are the very reverse,—because they are events new, unparalleled, not to be repeated,—the conditions of a new life, in which, by a new birth, we become one with him.

But the author represents the common doctrine as leading to this result ; “ A series of acts, attesting the power of spirit over body, the capacity of men to overcome the powers of nature, the possibility of rising into communion with the infinite, has been imagined.” Hence, according to him, “ the miracles of the middle ages,” — “ connected with the life of some favourite saint or hero.” By degrees, modern science has either accounted for these triumphs, or exposed them. Still there was a “ clinging to these instances of an actual connexion between the spiritual and the external world, and of the dominion of the first over the second.” And now “ science becoming dynamical rather than mechanical,” — “ man is able, through science, to attest the dominion of spirit over nature more completely than by any signs ” the miracle-workers “ ever wrought.” And the arts also,—sculpture mysteriously compelling the marble “ to express the thoughts and emotions of living

beings," poetry, and "the legends of Greece received as striking commentaries on the powers of her sculptors and poets," are "leading many in the same direction" in which science is leading others. How are these tendencies to be dealt with? (Pp. 274-276.)

"Romish priests" would summarily "banish the classics from our schools," and "restore, if possible, the old notions about the sun." Many "in Protestant England" think "that the facts of science, unless they are well sifted and sorted by religious men, and mixed with religious maxims, are likely to disturb the faith of the people, and that the beautiful forms of Greek sculpture, especially if they are not clothed, and made unnatural, must corrupt their morals." "The Romish protesters," according to the author, "may be wise in their generation." But "our Bible culture ought to have taught us" to receive the facts and laws of nature, as the facts and laws of a God of truth, and "to fear nothing but what is false, that being certainly of the devil." It should have made us "regard the study of forms as they came from the Divine hand, with the beauty which he has impressed upon them, as safe and elevating. Such has been the effect of the Bible upon the daughters of England; if her sons manifest it less, the Greek legends are not to blame." The blame lay "somewhere else." "It was that the words the boy heard in church, or was compelled to learn about the

religion of his countrymen, did not present themselves to him as connected with those which he was reading in his Greek or Latin form." "The Hebrew Scriptures, and the Creed and Catechism, were taken to be setting forth a theory about God. The Greek world was human. And what had the human and Divine to do with each other?" A strange question, the author thinks, ominously "asked by our youths," in "a country which receives as the cardinal tenet of its theology, that Jesus Christ is very God and very man." And it is not answered by any hesitating acceptance of "that tenet,"—such as "puts God at an infinite distance from man, and makes Him an object of dread not of confidence to the creatures who are declared to be formed in his image and who are craving for the knowledge of him." (Pp. 277–279.)

This is a grave crisis for England, especially for "her young men,"—who are struggling, the author tells us, between two tendencies. The one inclines them "to regard Christianity as utterly hopeless,—as convicted of incapacity for giving any relief to the efforts of human beings after a higher state." The other inclines them, it would seem, "to accept a Christianity which guarantees the salvation of their souls if they will abjure all such efforts, and surrender to a system that which their consciences tell them they can only surrender to God." "Their English hearts solemnly protest against either alternative;" but they cannot "live in a perpetual

see-saw ; nothing, they feel, is less English, less manly, than such a position."

How then is it to end? Ill, if all they hear is "loud ravings against Rationalism and Romanism, while nothing is offered them but what looks less sincere and hopeful than either." Well, on the other hand, "if the message is indeed brought to us, 'The Man is born into the world!' And is not this the message which is contained in the old story of Christ's ascension to the right hand of God, if we take that story not as a legend, but as the fulfilment of all legends; not as an idea, but as the substantiation of an idea in a fact?" Then, as the author eloquently explains his view, science, art, mythology, are studied in a new light. And he asks, "Why may not the countrymen of Bacon, and Shakspeare, and Milton, aspire thus to declare to all mankind, the significance of science and art, the essential and practical connexion of earth with heaven, of the human and the divine?" (Pp. 280, 281.)

It may be doubted whether either Bacon or Milton would have taken the author's way of declaring this. Nor, indeed, is it intuitively clear how the doctrine of regenerated humanity, or the message that 'The Man is born into the world,' or the story of Christ's ascension, as the author tells it, is to consecrate all science, art, and mythology. One can understand better how a regenerated human being, believing that he has an Advocate with the Father, who died to redeem men from all iniquity

and purify them unto himself,—who manifests the Father's love to guilty sinners and reconciles them to the Father,—who, having risen to insure their acceptance and peace with the Father, now offers continual intercession on their behalf, gives the Holy Spirit, makes all things work together for their good, and prepares a place for them;—one can understand how a regenerated man, or a regenerated youth, believing these things, may find in the discoveries of science, the triumphs of art, the legends of mythology, what may be turned to account for the glory of God, and for cultivating pure tastes and high hopes in man. And it cannot be too loudly proclaimed that the only security for faith and morals is to be found, not in any narrow jealousy of such studies, but in a right knowledge of God and Christ. The men who, “like Milton, have been most deeply penetrated by the meaning of these”—the Greek legends,—“if their minds have had a sound Hebrew root, have been the purest and the bravest.” (P. 278.) True. There is no purity or bravery in mere ignorance of evil or of danger. But the sound Hebrew root which Milton had was not precisely the belief that all things are already regenerated, elevated, made heavenly, in Christ, if only this could be realized;—but the strong persuasion that he had himself come to know One able and willing to renew, to sanctify and save, him and all men; to know Him as having been lifted up once, a sacrifice, upon the cross,—as now sitting, for important purposes, at the right hand of God.



But "the countrymen of Bacon, and Shakspeare, and Milton" are also, as the author reminds them, countrymen "of some millions of men, living on our own soil and in our own day, speaking our tongue; who work with their hands, and who have, besides those hands, senses which converse with this earth, sympathies that should unite them to each other, spirits that might hold converse with God." Thus appealed to on their behalf, we are told that we "have a still higher work to accomplish, which perhaps must precede the other." In order to this, we must rid the Eucharist of the distinctions and theologico-metaphysical subtleties of eighteen centuries. The doctrine of transubstantiation, we are asked to observe, "gathering up all idealism and all materialism into itself, is a compendious expression of all the contradictions in the hearts and understandings of human beings," and has "stood its ground against all notions that the bread and wine are memorials of an absent Lord, or that the believer creates a presence which, but for his faith, could not exist." How this last sarcasm is to be reconciled with the author's own account of the feeling of the disciples, that Christ "was drawing them from a world which they looked upon with their eyes, into an unseen world which another eye that he was opening must take in,"—he must himself explain. The believer does not create the presence, any more than the new eye of the disciples created the unseen world which it took in. The real and only



question is, whether Christ's presence in the Eucharist is bodily or spiritual. Is he present in the body? Or is he present only through the agency of the Spirit and the exercise of faith,—in a manner partly analogous to that in which a departed friend is present often to my mind and heart? The analogy is of course very imperfect; for the present dealing of the Holy Ghost with my memory and intellect, far transcends any dealing of these faculties themselves with the dim reminiscences of the past; and He whose words the Spirit brings to my remembrance and interprets, is one who in his own essential nature is not restricted to any place, but comes with the Father, to manifest himself to his disciples, as he does not manifest himself to the world.

The author, however, can find in the Supper a fellowship with the risen Saviour common equally to all. The advantage which he has is this. His view of the ascension of Christ, as amounting really to nothing more than invisibility, admits of his recognising a real presence in the Eucharist. If that be once recognised,—if Christ in the flesh,—or as “having a body,”—is actually with us in the eating of bread and the drinking of wine,—the ordinance becomes a sort of panacea equally for all. Some may, indeed, urge a troublesome question;—is Christ, bodily, more really present with us in the Eucharist than at other times? If so, can it be otherwise than by transubstantiation? If not, then is

not your sacrament as ideal as that of the Spiritualists? Is it not a matter of faith after all?

The author thinks that missionaries might use to good purpose the view which he advocates. He touches on that topic so briefly that it is not easy to follow him with equal brevity. The weakness of missions it is easy to point out; and it is easy to trace it to its cause in the divisions of Christendom. But how far, even if Christendom were rallied into a united testimony for such a universal regeneration and ascension of humanity and all earthly things in Christ, as the author holds,—and such a sacrament of it,—the heathen would in that event give up their sacrifices, invocations, and prayer-machines,—may well be doubted when the pantheism lying at the root of all idolatries is considered. (Pp. 284, 285.)

#### ESSAY XII.—ON THE JUDGMENT DAY.

The question of responsibility is to be met. The author deals first with “public opinion.” He describes its “vigilant and suspicious scrutiny.” A man’s “whole existence is in a great measure exposed; his sphere of independent action or judgment is very limited.” Then “comes a short recoil.” A man “will *not* have his deeds or thoughts moulded by this opinion.” “In youth,” especially, he takes “bold and eccentric

courses." But he "is driven into the old rut." Still, to understand what the world's judgment can do for us, as well as what it cannot do," we must "learn the secret of overcoming this power, of acting as if we were indeed responsible to some other and more righteous one." We must have "courage to say '*Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.*' Divines have thought that the words, '*we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*' might" teach the required lesson and inspire the necessary courage. And accordingly, "they have presented to their disciples the picture of a great assize, to which all ages and nations shall be summoned." (Pp. 288-291.) Thus the subject is introduced.

The author exposes the failure of even the best descriptions, rhetorical or pictorial, of this "great assize." And he says well, that "earnest, devout men" would not "have derived the least support from the anticipation of standing before Christ in some distant day, if they had not believed they were standing before him in their own day." "Whatever light they have thrown on the Scripture doctrine of a judgment to come has proceeded from the light in which they were continually walking." All true. But they "darkened the doctrine, or coloured and distorted it by their fancy," because they forgot "that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" or, in other words, because they thought that their standing before Christ

continually in their own day, and being judged by him *in foro conscientiae*, was no presumption against, but rather a presumption in favour of, the doctrine that they were one day to stand before him and be judged by him *in foro universi mundi*.

But the author thinks that an objection against the identifying of the present and future judgments, may be urged from the words in the Creed with which he has now to deal: '*From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead*;' although at the same time the objector is supposed to ask,—“If the most highly-wrought picture of the fact is of such small worth, what can be the use of repeating a bare announcement of it?”

He meets this objection, in the first instance, by rehearsing what he has been teaching about Christ, and proving the impossibility of any man being, under “any present or possible conditions of his being,” separated from Christ, or removed from his scrutiny and judgment. The disciples owned his present judgment of them more after his ascension than when he was visibly with them in the flesh. And the Creed affirms “first of all, this discovery of theirs,—that Christ, ascended on high at the right hand of God, is our judge, the judge of the living and the dead.” This is not “all that the words signify;” but “whatever else they signify, they signify this.” No one is likely to deny that they do; although the author thinks that “our popular discourses on a great judgment-day” tend to convey the idea that men

“are, at some distant, unknown period, to be brought into the presence of One who is far from them now, and who is not now fulfilling the office of a Judge, whatever other may be committed to him.” By all means let this notion of postponed judgment be denounced. ‘God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.’ What the author’s view of this present judgment as well as of the future really amounts to, may presently appear. (Pp. 292–297.)

The author points out another common error, and deals with it rather strangely. “If we follow the popular representations of the great assize, we should conclude that it was fulfilled when certain persons were subjected to an infinite penalty for their transgressions, and certain others were absolved from that penalty,—perhaps acquired, by some means, an infinite reward.” Thus, according to the author, “divines” use the analogy of “earthly jurisprudence;” legitimately, as he admits. But we must consult counsel learned in the law. We must lay the case before some “English jurist.” Is this your conception of “the function of a judge?” No, replies the solemn sage, somewhat astonished at his being asked such a question;—“It is a very secondary part of this function to assign penalties or rewards: that, in a majority of cases, is done already by the law which the judge announces. But to discern who is right and who is wrong;”—“to find out the fact:”—“to detect the lie;”—“to justify the good and honest purpose

which may have got itself bewildered in a variety of complications and contradictions,—*hic labor, hoc opus* ; here is, indeed, a sphere for the exercise of that judicial faculty, which we all esteem so highly.’” (P. 298.) Thanks, Mr Attorney. Spoken like an oracle. The author has it hollow. The umpire decides in his favour. Parties are called to hear the decision. The author appears, successful and triumphant. But where are those on the other side? Where are the “divines,” with their “popular representations of the great assize,” against whom the author has got so conclusive an opinion? Will none of them come forward to accept the defeat? Did they not consent to the reference? Surely. And did they not agree to the terms in which the question was to be asked? Not they; not a man of them. The “English jurist” feels that he has been befooled: and the author wins a barren victory.

Seriously, it is indeed mere trifling with the most solemn of all subjects, to deal in caricature, as the author does; to try, as it would seem, by imputing a sheer absurdity to those whom he is opposing, to get rid of the real question at issue, and ride off upon some irrelevant commonplace of law or of criticism. And yet the main effort of the author in this Essay is to prove what no one denies, and what is nothing to the purpose. Of course, the idea of judgment is “discrimination or discovery.” (P. 299.) And it is all the same who judges, when, and where; still the essence of the pro-



cedure is "discrimination or discovery;" whether it be the word of God that judges me, or my own conscience, or the Lord of my conscience, or "*a human day*," or '*the great and the terrible day of the Lord*.' Everywhere and always it is "discrimination or discovery" "exercised over the man himself, over his internal character, over his meaning and will." "The substitution of any mere external trial or examination for this," anywhere or at any time, is rejected by those whom the author is opposing, as earnestly as it can be by the author himself, and by the Bible. It is held to be "inconsistent with the spirit and grandeur of Christ's revelation." The author ought to remember that it is not Martin's picture of the final judgment he has to criticise, nor any poetic rhapsody of Robert Montgomery; but the doctrine held by the general body of Christians,—by theologians as alive as he can be to the danger of substituting an external trial for the trial of the internal character,—the doctrine which they think they find expressed in such words as these:—'the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ.'

The real and only question is not about the precise meaning of "*a human day*," or the day of the Lord, or unveiling, or manifestation;—let it be admitted that our being judged by Christ is his being unveiled to us and our being "**MADE MANIFEST**" before his tribunal;—but the question is,—To what effect and with what issue? Is it to the effect of his dealing with us judicially accord-



ing to what we shall then be made manifest to be? Is it to the effect of our being not merely tried, but sentenced? Is it with the issue of our hearing one or other of these awards pronounced by the Son of man, the King: 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;' or 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels?'

It is not asked, at this stage, how these sentences are carried into effect, or how long they remain in force? But is there a time coming when all men, being made manifest before the tribunal of Christ, shall receive sentence, and be acquitted or condemned according to the deeds done in the body? Nay, it is not even necessary here to ask whether the judicial procedure is or is not to be simultaneous, or at the same time for all. The day of the Lord, the day of judgment,—of unveiling and manifestation,—may be an extended period, an age, a millennium. Still the question remains the same:—Is there, or is there not, awaiting every man, at some time in his history, a "discrimination or discovery," to be "exercised over his internal character," before Christ as judge, for the purpose of determining whether he is thereafter to be treated as a condemned criminal, or as an acquitted man, entitled to acceptance and a gracious 'recompence of reward?'

The author evades that question. He raises a cloud of dust,—legal, ethical, and what is unusual with him,

critical too,—round about it. But the question itself he does not face. And yet he ought to know that it is the only question of real, essential importance here.

It is, however, very plain that the author does in point of fact settle that question; and that he settles it in the negative. He does not believe that men are to be tried before the Searcher of hearts, with a view to their being sentenced, to the blessing or to the curse, according to what the trial may make manifest.

His own account of what Paul means when he says, ‘We must all be made manifest before the tribunal of Christ,’ sets aside that belief. “A time must come when it will be clearly discovered to all men what their state was while they were pilgrims in this world; that they were in a spiritual relation just as much as they were in relation to those visible things of which their senses took cognizance. That which has been hidden will be made known; the darkness will no longer be able to quench the light which has been shining in the midst of it, and seeking to penetrate it; each man will be revealed as that which he actually is, that every one may receive the things done in the body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” The author is not “exactly satisfied with our rendering of this sentence,”—the sentence about receiving the deeds done in the body,—but he “is not prepared to suggest another.” (P. 301.)

So, then, the final judgment is not an act of judicial

authority towards us, but a new light breaking in upon us, giving us a fresh start onwards from the position we shall then see that we had in the body. There is nothing like retribution in it: in fact, it is more like a regeneration. But really there is no final judgment at all; no judgment hereafter, differing materially from the judgment which is exercised now. "The tribunal of Christ is one which is not to be set up for the first time in some distant day, amidst earthly pomp and ceremonial," "but "one before which we, in our own inmost being, are standing now;" the only change being, "that the time will come when we shall know that it is so, and when all which has concealed the Judge from us shall be taken away." (P. 302.) The contrast is of course unfair. The tribunal of Christ will be then what it is now. We are made manifest before that tribunal in an important sense now. We shall be made manifest before it completely and nakedly then. But will it be for the same purpose then, as now? Now, it is ordinarily for regeneration or revival or discipline. Then, it will be for retribution and reward.

The author anticipates here an objection founded on the words in the Apostles' Creed—*From thence he shall come*: and the words in the Nicene Creed—*He shall come again in glory*.

As to the first, reading the words—*From thence he shall come*—"following immediately upon the account of an ascension into heaven," one would not think they im-

plied that "he would descend from that state—that he would assume again the conditions and limitations of the one which he had left." (P. 303.) Certainly not, whatever these very absurd "divines" may say. "The favourite scriptural analogy of the sun coming forth out of his bridal chamber," is far better. Undoubtedly it is; and it may relieve the author to assure him that nobody will ask him to "accept" "the difficult hypothesis" of a reversal of the resurrection, which he is candid enough to ascribe to certain parties, and which, he adds, he himself might be induced or obliged to "take up with," if scriptural authority were produced for it. By all means let him accept "the natural" hypothesis; although, after all, it is not clear that even "the favourite scriptural analogy of the sun coming forth out of his bridal chamber," quite squares with his view, as that may be gathered from his criticism on "*ἀποκάλυψις*, or 'unveiling;'" "*φανέρωσις*, or 'a manifestation;'"—or from his appeal to Paul's usual method of describing his own conversion, and preaching the gospel, in accordance with it, to his fellow-men. (P. 304.) There is no room whatever left for any arrest or interruption, in the experience of individual men, or in the history of the race, such as a real judicial procedure on the part of God must cause. The "*human day*," and '*the day of the Lord*,' are not two judgments, distinct in their nature from one another. They are the same in kind. The only difference is, that men come to know better what they really are, when

they are made to feel that they are under the scrutiny, not of their fellow-mortals merely, but of their Lord.

The author finds "unspeakable benefit" in Paul's "use of this form of expression. Instead of allowing us to dream of a final judgment, which shall be unlike any other that has ever been in the world, he compels us to look upon every one of what we rightly call 'God's judgments' as essentially resembling it in kind and principle. Our eagerness to deny this doctrine,—to make out an altogether peculiar and unprecedented judgment at the end of the world,"—has led us, first, to "outrage the language of Scripture;"—secondly, "to treat with most especial contumely" our Lord's discourse about the temple, and his declaration that the generation then living would see the fulfilment of his words;—and, thirdly, to imagine "that we are only using metaphors when we speak of God as coming forth to judge the world in any crisis of war or revolution. Certainly the Bible justifies that language, as not metaphorical, but most real. It speaks of all such crises as '*days of the Lord.*'" (Pp. 305, 306.)

Certainly it does; and it distinguishes them all from any "human day," any judgment of men upon one another. There are judgments of God on the earth now, resembling in kind and principle the final judgment. The destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem was one of these; so was the Flood; and so are many events occurring publicly and privately in our own

day. But what is the feature of resemblance? It is not that the characters of men are tried and manifested to themselves or others. It is that they are punishments, — penal inflictions, — announced beforehand in such cases as the Flood and the fall of Jerusalem, and unrelentingly executed. The difference is, that the judgments now often want that full “unveiling” and “manifestation” which will give its terrible solemnity to the judgment then. In so far as these visitations, whether in the prospect or in the endurance of them, serve to discover men to themselves, they may answer the purpose of discipline and correction. That, however, is not their essential character. They are presages and pledges of retribution. They proclaim with trumpet-tongue a real judgment to come.

The author finds in “the Nicene phrase,” a safeguard against the notion that “Christ will resume earthly conditions, take a throne in some part of this earth,” and “be invested with vulgar ensigns of royalty.” And here he has a word to say to “the supporters of the pre-millennial advent,” — to “true-hearted Millennarians.”

So far he sympathises with them. He cannot understand how “the writers of the Old Testament,” and “of the New,” should represent the final judgment as an object of desire and hope, if we are to “look upon it only as something exceedingly terrible, which we are to set before our readers” “when we can no longer move



them by any testimonies we bear concerning the mercy of God or his redeeming love ; if the thought of Christ as a Judge is one that we are to shrink from, though we may find satisfaction in thinking of him as a Saviour." "To escape from this amazing contradiction," he considers it "natural for men to invent a theory, and say, 'He is coming, but not *only* for this end, not *first* for this end. He is coming to reign over his saints,—to give them rest from their enemies ; then the judgment of the world will follow." Better this, he adds, than to "contemplate Christ as one who has saved heretofore, but is coming hereafter only to punish and condemn." From the tyranny of some expectants of the Millennium,—Fifth-monarchy men perhaps,—he prays "the good Lord to deliver his bleeding earth." But he is glad to think that there are many "who rejoice in it only because it is identified in their minds with the victory of Christ over what is evil, with the establishment of his gracious dominion over all people. Such men felt themselves tied and bound by the notion of the religious world, that Christ had taken the nature of man and died on the cross, only to save a few elect souls. They were sure that he must intend to bless mankind, to redeem the earth." He honours them accordingly. He suggests, however, that "a creed that speaks of a Son of God and a Son of man, has no need to tell us,—could not tell us, without contradicting all its other statements,—that at some distant day he will assume an authority which he



has never exercised yet." He then eloquently rehearses the instances of Christ's exercise of his authority from the downfall of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the Roman empire; tracing it in the stream of western civilisation, and the war of good against evil in modern society. And he anticipates a time when there shall be an unveiling and manifestation of Christ thus exercising his authority, "so that every eye may see him, so that every king, and judge, and priest, who has professed to rule or teach by his authority or for him, shall be forced to own to himself and to the universe, whether he has been serving truth or a lie; whether he has been serving Christ, or Mammon, or himself; whether he has bowed down to the judgment and opinion of any public, religious or secular, or has walked as a child of the day in that light which lighteth every man who does not choose the darkness." And what then? Is Christ to separate the two classes personally, and pronounce sentence upon them respectively? Or is "the kingdom of righteousness, and truth, and peace,—which is the kingdom of God and of his Son, and therefore can have no end,"—to comprehend them all? The author says, "a sound creed should convey to us the needful assurance and comfort, that all events have been working under a divine guidance to a divine issue; that nothing which has been good can ever perish; that nothing which is evil can abide in that kingdom." (Pp. 306–310.)

The truth is, neither any doctrine about the Millen-

nium, nor any doctrine about election,—a subject which the author is fond of hitting at, and which is far too serious for such a mode of treatment,—has anything whatever to do with the question raised in this Essay. That question is not,—Is Christ one day to exercise an authority which he is not exercising now?—but,—Are men to be tried judicially before him, and is he to fix, according to the issue of the trial, whether they are to be acquitted or condemned,—to be welcomed as blessed into the kingdom of the Father, or to depart as cursed into the realms of woe? The author decides the question in the negative; and it must be added that he does so without once attempting to argue it from reason or from Scripture,—upon mere misrepresentations of the common doctrine of a judgment to come.

It is extremely painful to notice the author's last attack on what he calls "the popular notion on this subject." For "producing terror in the minds of thieves and vagabonds," he prefers "the constabulary force," as "a more useful, effectual, and also a more godly, instrument," which at least "does assert the existence of an actual present justice." For influencing "the lives of ordinary worldly men," he thinks apparently that "the kind of mysterious judgment" which some might charge him with substituting for the popular notion, may tell upon them as public opinion. As regards "religious men," he holds it to be "quite clear" that they "are not in the least satisfied with" the

popular notion, "but are inclined rudely to discard it. Such men demand for *themselves* an habitual government, inspection, judgment, reaching to the roots of their heart and will." So they do. And because they do so, they try to live habitually, by anticipation, in the light of the unveiling and manifestation of the final judgment. They have a sense of righteousness, moreover,—a resentment of wrong,—which makes them rejoice with trembling in the prospect of a judicial reckoning on the part of God with his creatures; they could not otherwise be satisfied, or feel that law, government, and order, are realities. And far from being inclined to use this awful theme as a weapon of rhetorical art,—a last resource when the theme of mercy fails,—they recoil with horror from the thought of either telling their fellow-sinners that they have no curse to fear, or suffering them to meet it unwarned; 'Knowing the terror of the Lord, they persuade men.'

This is not "low Judaism"—nor "low heathenism" either; although it is not what the author announces as what is ultimately required;—"a judgment and separation which shall come from the revelation of Him who has redeemed and glorified our whole humanity, between that in us which is his, and that which we have contracted by turning away from him." For that judgment,—“for gathering together in Christ all the limbs of his scattered body in heaven and earth,”—the author asks not "a day of twenty-four hours in duration," but "one

which has dawned on the world already, which our consciences tell us we may dwell in now, which therefore Scripture and reason both affirm must wax clearer and fuller till he who is the Sun of righteousness is felt to be shining everywhere, and till there is no corner of the universe into which his beams have not entered." (Pp. 310-312.) Of such a day of judgment, there is no assignable end; in it there cannot possibly be any condemnation. It is, in fact, no judicial procedure at all. It is a process going on indefinitely for refining universal redeemed and glorified humanity, wherever and in whomsoever it is found, purging it more and more at successive stages of any dross it has contracted, with no security that the process shall ever come to a final issue in the case of any, unless it is to come to a favourable issue in the case of all. It is endless discipline,—chastisement,—probation; prolonging in the life to come, under a clearer light, the experience of the life—that now is, with no sure prospect of there ever being a close.

There is a sort of appendix to this Essay, in which the author invites Unitarians and other dissenters to take refuge in creeds from the oppression of tenets. He says "they will be driven to creeds by their weariness of tenets." A tenet is an instrument of tyranny, apparently because it is the imposing of one man's opinion upon another. A creed is the palladium of liberty, because it points to a person. "If they want freedom for their reason and wills, the old creeds speak

of One who came to deliver them." Tenets would "tie down the language of Scripture by the language of a formula;" "Creeds oblige us to look out of themselves to some book which shall unfold the person and acts of him of whom they are bearing witness." The distinction is applied to the doctrine of a judgment to come. As a mere tenet, it takes "the old Minos form, or one that is akin to it,"—derived "from heathenism." "It assumes a higher, nobler, more practical form when, ceasing to be a tenet, it becomes part of a creed. When it is viewed as one of the acts of a living person, a Son of man, and a Son of God, then its coating of superstition falls off from it: it becomes identified with the greatest triumphs which humanity has yet won; with its present struggles, with its most glorious hopes." (Pp. 313–317.) Now whether as a tenet or as part of a creed, judgment must be the act of a living person, of Christ. This is true on any view. The author may hold, perhaps, that a judge sitting to administer justice is rather a sort of legal machine grinding out decisions, than a living person putting forth his living energies in action. And perhaps he may be so far right. The tenet, in his view of it, merely exhibits in remote distance before me an impressive scene, got up as if it were for stage effect,—a throne and One seated upon it who is to me little more than a personification of cold, formal, statutory law. That, it may be presumed, is the old Minos form. It is not, however, precisely the doctrine usually embraced

by "divines." Christ's coming to judgment is not an isolated act, separated from what he is now doing, and will continue throughout endless ages to be doing, for the very purpose of winning for humanity its greatest triumphs and realising its most glorious hopes. It is a step in the progress of that wise and gracious plan which he is carrying forward by an incessant and uninterrupted living personal agency for the highest good of all who, while the opportunity is given to them, consent to fall in with its arrangements. It is, however, a real and important step. It is indispensable, if he is to deal with them as free, responsible, moral agents,—the once rebellious but now loyal subjects of a righteous moral government. For in the heart of a loyal subject there is an irrepressible instinct and sense of right which demands a day of reckoning, to vindicate the ways of God, to redress the wrongs of those who have trusted in him, to establish the eternal throne in righteousness. How strong that feeling was in the manly, unsophisticated bosom of such real heroes as David, the Psalms all throughout attest; it often shook his faith; and the rest he found was when he planted his foot on the assurance of an actual judgment to come. If Jesus Christ is a mere King of men,—a pattern Man, identifying humanity with the divine nature in himself, exalting humanity to heaven,—the action in which he is engaged,—leading, guiding, enlightening, quickening all men,—may advance without break or material change, inde-

finitely—for ever. But if he is the Son, sent by the Father to treat with a race of fallen intelligences, who have cast off their allegiance to his Father's authority, and are under his Father's suspended sentence of retribution,—if he is to treat with them upon certain terms, making the final issue of the respite granted to them turn chiefly or wholly on the reception which they give to him,—there cannot but come a time when he must judicially determine who are and who are not to be saved. Which of these two views of man's condition and of the government of God is the right one, let reason, conscience, and Scripture say.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUBJECTION OF THE CHURCH TO DIVINE GUIDANCE—  
ESSAYS XIII. XIV. XV.

### ESSAY XIII.—ON INSPIRATION.

THE three Essays here classed together, under a somewhat vague general title, for which of course the author is not responsible, correspond to what is usually made a separate head in theology, embracing the whole subject of the Christian society. In this connexion, the Word of God, the rule or directory,—and the Spirit of God, the living agent, the moving power,—are regarded as concurring in the formation and regulation of the Church. It is true that the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures may and ought to find a place earlier in the inquiry. It should come in at the very beginning as a preliminary to the whole; and so, also, should the consideration of what the Holy Spirit does for enabling men to understand the Scriptures. To know what weight is due to the testimony of the Bible, and how it should be studied in order to its being rightly interpreted, would seem to

be the natural and primary conditions of a study whose professed object it is to ascertain the revealed mind and will of God. These topics are not thus discussed in this book. They are introduced chiefly as bearing upon the question of the Church ; and, accordingly, it is in that view of them that they are now to be considered.

In the preamble of the Essay on Inspiration, the author first shakes himself free from "popular views," as being vague, sickly, good for the platform and the boudoir, but not fit for the hearts of the people, nor accordant with the creeds. Next, he braves as a martyr the displeasure of "the religious world," which, like the miser, is "continually in dread of burglars and pick-pockets," and would "banish trust and cultivate universal suspicion." Thirdly, at the risk apparently of not unfrequently "expending argument,—probably, which is much more precious, temper,—with no calculable return," he appeals "from the region of self-satisfied, untroubled orthodoxy," as well as from "the region of equally self-satisfied, untroubled unbelief," to a middle region of anxious inquiry with which he justly sympathises more. And at last, having calmed his mind by slaying several foes, he proceeds "to fix his thoughts on the word *inspiration*," and to give the result of previous and present reflection on "our uses of the name which we feel to be so sacred." (Pp. 318–324.)

He has five preliminary paragraphs. 1. "The singers

of old" were wont to ask "some divine power to inspire them; and they were not "merely using a trade phrase;" it "expressed their strongest convictions."

2. Is the inspiration of the Bible at all similar to what these singers of old asked? Some say—Yes: the difference is one of degree merely. Others again say—'The Bible must be looked upon as *the* inspired book.'

3. "Religious men speak of themselves as taught, actuated, inhabited by a Divine Spirit," without whose "guidance they could know nothing of the Scriptures."

"Is *this* the inspiration which we attribute to the writers of the Old and New Testaments, or is that different from it in kind?" 4. Many religious teachers—fanatics—

claim to be inspired; and crowds run after them. Here is "a very serious fact indeed." "The peremptory decrees of our schools have not cleared it up." "We must understand ourselves a little better about its nature and cause."

5. The Church of England, lacking spirituality, as some allege,—sworn foe to fanaticism, as her sons boast,—"claims inspiration for her sons, in a fuller, larger sense than either of the two classes" last referred to. She prays God to grant that "by his holy *inspiration* we may think those things that be good;" and that "the thoughts of our hearts may be cleansed by the *inspiration* of the Holy Spirit." "When we speak of inspiration do we mean inspiration?" Or "are we paltering with words in a double sense?"

Thus, then, we have—1. The inspiration which the

“singers of old” asked, earnest and believing: 2, The inspiration which religious men say is necessary in order to their understanding the Bible: 3, The inspiration which fanatical teachers claim; and 4, The inspiration for which the Church of England directs her sons to pray. The questions thus suggested are to be discussed. “Let us not shrink from them, or dispose of them lightly and frivolously, as if the hearts of tens of thousands were not interested in them.” (Pp. 324–327.)

But first, let a statement which occurs further on in the Essay be considered. When he passes from the Greeks to the Jews, the author says: “Inspiration was not the first idea in the mind of a Jew, as it was perhaps in that of a Greek. The Law took precedence of the Prophets; the Covenant was before either;” and after quoting the covenant with Abraham and the commission to Moses, he adds, before going on to the function of the prophets: “The righteous King and Judge, who claims men as his servants, who teaches them to judge between right and wrong, is revealed first.” (P. 332.)

Does this mean that the first idea in the mind of a Jew was not inspiration, but revelation? That is true: and it is important: it reaches further than at first appears. A Jew believed that God had actually spoken to the patriarchs, as one man speaks to another, telling them things which they could not otherwise have known, giving promises and enacting laws. He believed that

in the Pentateuch he had a true record of what God really did say to Abraham, Moses, and the rest. But his first idea was revelation,—the revelation which God made to the fathers,—actually and literally communicating his mind to them. The inspiration by which the record of that revelation was composed, was an entirely different idea, second and subsequent to the other. And the ideas are, or ought to be, equally distinct from one another, and they ought to stand in the same order, in the mind of a Christian, with reference to the whole Bible. I believe that the Bible is the record of a revelation, or of a succession of revelations. I believe that God has spoken ‘at sundry times and in divers manners’ to men; and that I have an authentic record of what he has said, in whatever manner he was pleased to say it, in the Scriptures, and there only. How the books of Scripture were composed,—under what sort of guidance the authors of them were,—is not the first point for inquiry. Am I satisfied, on good and sufficient reasons, that God has on various occasions communicated his will to men,—as I communicate my will, by word of mouth or by letter or by message, to my fellow-men? And am I satisfied that I have in these writings a correct and true account of what these communications were? Then, if so, I may perhaps learn from the communications themselves something as to the manner in which the accuracy of the account of them has been provided for and secured. This is the second inquiry which I institute, and this is

the stage at which it should be instituted, when I pass from the subject of revelation to that of inspiration.

If this plain, common-sense, business-like statement of the question were kept in view, it would prevent much confusion. For one thing, it at once disposes of three out of the four inspirations with which the author sets out; if not, indeed, of the whole four; for even fanatics usually claim rather a high degree of insight into the revelation already received, than any commission to give a new one. The discovery of a new Bible alleged by the Mormonites,—the doctrine of the inward light held by the Quakers,—and it is to be feared by others who do not so openly avow it,—may be considered as exceptions; but even these touch the question of revelation more properly than the question of inspiration. And so also, in point of fact, does nearly the entire discussion with which this Essay is occupied; although the author has chosen to call it an essay on Inspiration. Let his own method of discussion, however, be resumed and followed out.

1. "When St Paul came into the different cities of Greece, he found men whose traditions told them of an inspiration, which poets, prophets, priestesses, received from some divine source." (P. 327.) So the author opens the discussion. "These traditions," he adds, "had facts for their basis. Men were actually seen to be carried far above the level of their ordinary thoughts." "The conscience of men," also, as well as experience,

"was entitled to bear its testimony. It said, 'this power is something which we cannot measure or reduce under rules. It works in us, but it is above us. It must come from some higher source ;'" from "a God." "The next and most awful question was, 'What God, what is his *name*?' " Here "new facts forced themselves upon their observation. A man under the influence of some extraordinary *afflatus*, might be raised to a higher and nobler state." "Or he might be merely inebriated, maddened, . . . might, in the worst and grossest sense, lose the mastery of himself." "The theory of a divine Inspirer must, they thought, explain both these discordant experiences." The "legends and grotesque forms" connected with "Dionysius," shew "how the heart and imagination of the Greek were exercised with that problem." (Pp. 327, 328.)

How then might Paul have acted,—how did he act? He did not tell these people "that all the thoughts of their ancestors were unmeaning and ridiculous." He took a course which "tended to awaken that old faith out of its sleep." "He spoke of gifts of healing, of speech, of government." He spoke of them as "proceeding from a Person," whose prescnce he spoke of "as the great gift of all," "coming to men, because a Man had appeared in the world, and had ascended on high, who was the Son of God." "Such language could not but associate itself with all the thoughts which they had before of inspiration and an Inspirer. We know that it did, for most of



the confusions in the Corinthian church arose from the old dreams of a Dionysiac inspiration." To distinguish the two, Paul did not say, "'Those powers which you referred to your gods are not what we are permitted and enabled to exercise ;'" for then it might have been asked "'What then *is* the origin of *those* ?'" But he said "'What you have attributed to a demon, . . . I come to vindicate for the Father of spirits, for the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.'" This was his testimony, that the "reign of the old gods was over." He told "of the gradual discovery of man's relation to God, and consequently of man's spiritual condition ;" and the hearers recognised the "necessary corollary" "that a Divine Spirit should come to meet and raise a spirit hard pressed with animal inclinations." Subjection either to frenzy or to mere animal impulses was thus to cease, when "those very powers and gifts, which man had felt before he could not ascribe to himself, were ascribed to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of order and truth." Then, again, "the old belief" had been "partial, narrow, peculiar ;" trying "to explain how extraordinary men, or men in some extraordinary crisis of their lives, were able to do strange acts, to speak unusual words. St Paul's gospel was human and universal." It recognised, indeed, distinctions of gifts and callings. But first it asserted, as above them all, the one common "human gift." "The Divine Spirit, the Spirit of love, who was promised to all, was described as the source and spring

of those peculiar endowments which were given to this and that man as he willed. They were to esteem their gifts mainly as witnesses of his presence." His presence, as the human gift, covers all other gifts, whether old or new. (Pp. 327-331.)

Thus, it seems, Paul taught the doctrine of inspiration to the Greeks. He seized, elevated, enlarged, their old belief in the inspiration of heroes, poets, prophets, priests; vindicated that inspiration, with its gifts, for God; connected it with the Son of God, and ascribed it to the immediate presence of the Divine Spirit given to all. Now, whether this account be right or wrong, it is not necessary at present to inquire. Be it right or wrong, it has really nothing whatever to do with the question on hand. That question, as raised by Paul's preaching to the Greeks, relates not to any inspiration promised or given to them, but to the inspiration of his own teaching. Had Paul a message to deliver from the Lord? And was he inspired to deliver it? Were his commission and his inspiration different from the power or *afflatus* which moved the seers and oracles of Greece? That is surely, in the first instance at least, the question. And even if we are forced to complicate it by taking into account the gifts exercised by the early converts to Christianity, gifts of healing, of speech, of government, still the point is a simple one, and may be thus put:

Suppose the Corinthian church met, not to hear Paul, but when he is absent. A brother declares that he has received a communication from the Lord, and he utters

it accordingly in the hearing of all. Is there any difference between that and the old Greek inspiration? Is there any difference between that and the presence of the Holy Spirit promised to all? It may be retorted,—Does not this take for granted that the Lord first communicates to a man, directly and immediately, what he would have him to say, and then guides him in saying it? Certainly it does. But then, is it not on that account all the more apparent that we must first settle what revelation is,—or whether there be such a thing as revelation,—and that the tug of war,—the question at issue,—lies really there?

2. This is still further seen in following the author when he turns from the Greek inspiration to the Jewish. “What kind of dignity did Paul claim for the inspiration of his own seers and prophets?” They had, as has been seen, a revelation to start from; the covenant and the law; what God had said to Abraham and to Moses. “The righteous King and Judge, who claims men as his servants, who teaches them to judge between right and wrong, is revealed first.” The prophet is the “witness of unchangeable right, and of judgments that shall distinguish between it and the wrong. And the Word, who comes to him, and speaks to him, makes him aware how he and his people are related to” God; and how “there is a King on the holy hill of Zion, one whom he can call his Lord, and to whom the Lord is saying, ‘*Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.*’ The revelation of this mysterious

Teacher, this divine King, is what the prophet looks for; he gains glimpses of the steps and method of his manifestation through his own sorrows and the trials of his country;" and he anticipates "the full declaration of God some day," and man's attainment then of "his proper glory." (Pp. 331, 332.)

"But how,"—the author asks,—“how is it that the prophet is enabled to enter into these divine communications? What is there in him different from other men which makes him capable of them?” And he describes a prophet under the stirrings within him of a power which subdues and humbles him, and makes him feel, when he speaks, that his words are the Lord's, and belong as much to all his countrymen as to him. “This is surely *inspiration*.” Possibly. But since there may be inspirations without these “stirrings within,”—and since there may be these “stirrings within” without inspiration,—it may be lawful to inquire what are the “divine communications” into which the inspired prophet is “to enter,” and of which he, more than other men, is made “capable?” Are they communications from God to him, to be by him conveyed to his fellows? Has he a message from God,—no matter how he receives it,—and is he infallibly moved and guided to deliver it to men? Is he authorized to say, in an exact and literal sense, as a king's commissioned and instructed messenger might say, ‘Thus saith the Lord’? That is inspiration, for which

Pythonic raptures and ecstasies are a poor substitute. Nor is it enough to ask, "Who is the inspirer?"—and then to run once more through John the Baptist's preaching;—the Saviour's baptism, his receiving the Holy Spirit, his ministry, his promise of the Comforter, his ascension, the day of Pentecost,—and his coming to all the Church of the Spirit of the Son of God. It is easy thus to identify the privileges of the sons of God under all dispensations, and to trace throughout the working of one and the same divine person,—the Holy Spirit. And, no doubt, this is "a magnificent idea," and must have given to Paul an elevated view of the whole Scriptures of God, such as he had not before, and would not willingly lose now. Still, could he ever cease to feel that he and his fellow-apostles were inspired revealers of the Lord's will,—and that the prophets had been so also,—not merely as "entering into divine communications,"—but as receiving them directly from God, and uttering them directly to men?

The author, however, has a theory of inspiration to submit to Paul, from which he is sure that apostle would have revolted. "Can we conceive any view of the Holy Scriptures,—either of those he had known from a child, or those he was contributing to form,—which would have seemed to him more dreadful, than one which, under colour of exalting them, should set aside their own express testimony concerning the unspeakable gift which God had conferred on his creatures?" If

he would have been indignant with those who forbid men to read the Bible, he would have been equally "indignant with those who, talking of the Bible as their only religion, and only rule of life, prevent it from being either, by saying that its inspiration has no relation to that of the writers whose dark sayings it illuminates, to that of the human beings it is intended to educate and console." (Pp. 336, 337.) What this means is not very clear. Before the apostle is asked, like the "English jurist," to decide in the reference, the terms of it must at least be intelligible.

3. They may perhaps become so, as "this scribe notion of the Bible" is further canvassed by the author. But first, it may be proper to clear up, if possible, his way of putting the case to the apostle. The inspiration of a revealer,—of one receiving and conveying a fresh communication from heaven to earth,—is a different thing from the inspiration of one,—it may be the same person, the revealer himself,—who by the help of the Holy Spirit uses and applies a revelation or communication already existing. Nor let any one make a work about the question—wherein lies the difference? The agent is the same; and what the manner of the agency is in either case, none can tell. But let common sense judge. Have I a message given to me by God, to be delivered by me to my fellow-men? Have I to make the most of messages, intimations, discoveries, now or previously within my reach and within the reach of all?



Surely what the Holy Spirit has to do for me in the former case, is not to be confounded with what he has to do for me in the latter. And surely also, it would be unfair to say that what the Spirit has to do when he enables me to convey the message,—in dark sayings, perhaps,—has no relation to what he does when he illuminates these dark sayings to myself,—as he illuminates to me other dark sayings uttered by other revealers,—and when he enables the human beings to whom they come to be both educated and consoled by means of them.

But “this scribe notion of the Bible was stoutly resisted by the evangelical teachers of the last age:”—“Francke and Spener:”—“our own Venns and Newtons.” They opposed the hard orthodox doctors, “who looked upon the Bible as a mere collection of dry facts and dogmas, and who supposed that it could be understood without the aid of such a Spirit as dwelt in the writers of it.” The author hopes that their “testimony is not extinct.” He believes “that in solitary chambers, among bed-ridden sufferers,” “the Bible is read as a book which proves itself not to be the work of a different Spirit from that which is reproving and comforting the sinner, but of the same.” Surely; it is the same Spirit who inspired the Bible, who also deals with the humblest reader of it. But if it be so, “we must forego the demand which we make on the consciences of young men, when we compel them to declare that they regard the inspiration of the Bible as generically unlike that which



God bestows on his children in this day." (Pp. 337, 338.)

Here the author unfairly, though of course without intending it, shifts the terms of the question. The belief of which "bed-ridden sufferers" are not to be spoiled is,—that He who inspired the Bible is the very same Spirit who, by means of the Bible, is reproving and comforting them. The belief which he represents as incompatible with that is,—that the work of the Spirit in the inspiration of the Bible is generically unlike the work of the same Spirit in reproving and comforting sinners by means of the Bible. Where is the contradiction? Where is the inconsistency? It is difficult to be patient when such names as Venn and Newton are thus invoked. The author knows, or ought to know, that these holy men held fast, both the doctrine that the Holy Spirit inspired the Bible, guiding infallibly the authors of the sacred books in all that they wrote,—and also the doctrine that the same Holy Spirit inspires the humble reader of the Bible, imparting to him a quick understanding of its contents and a warm feeling of their value. They were far above any verbal juggle. It is the same Spirit, they could say; and for anything we know, it may be the same kind of operation "generically." But we thank God that there are these two works,—not conflicting but graciously conspiring; the Holy Spirit giving us infallibly the mind of God in his word; and the Holy Spirit enabling us to apprehend the mind of God

thus given in his word. It will be a sad day for "bed-ridden sufferers," and for all sufferers of the sinful race of Adam, when they listen to men who, like the author, would put asunder what God has joined together; and persuade them that in the words of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, they have nothing generically different from the promptings of the Spirit which, in connexion with these very words, their consciences recognise in themselves. It is a sad look-out for England, if her young men, and especially "the younger members of evangelical families," are to have no better defence against neology than such arts of reasoning as it has been shewn that the author does not count it unworthy of himself to employ.

The author describes the growth of the doubts which, he seems to think, not unnaturally spring up in the minds of those who have been educated in the common evangelical opinion. He puts the case of a young man taught to own the necessity of the Spirit's illumination when he reads the Bible,—encouraged afterwards to examine for himself the claims of the Bible,—finding difficulties,—and having a dry theory of universal and uniform inspiration flung as a wet blanket upon his inquiring spirit. (P. 340.) There are gross misrepresentations in the picture. The separation of "the external evidence" from that which the Bible contains in itself;—the telling young men that they do not "at present possess the illumination" of the Spirit, and under that condition sending them to study the external

evidence ;—and the wholesale way in which it is alleged that their perplexities are met ;—the entire description, in short, is an exaggeration of the most injudicious training any ignorant bigot professing evangelical opinions may be supposed to give to his sons. But the material point is,—how does the author deal with the case? What is his method? What does he tell these young men about the Bible?

“There is divinity here and inspiration there ;” “there are passages which speak to the heart within them,—which awaken a heart that was asleep ;—there is a divine Word who is enlightening them, a divine Spirit who is seeking to inspire them.” And they may be brought “gradually, with many tears and much joy, to trace that Word and that Spirit not only here and there, but connecting” the “documents” of Scripture and “the facts of the universe ;” “reconciling, explaining,” harmonizing all. (P. 341.) The “Word” in this passage is not the Scripture, but Christ.

Is it not plain that this is teaching them, not the inspiration of the Bible, but their own inspiration? The Bible is not inspired in any other sense than that in which they are themselves inspired. The Word, that is the Son, and the Spirit, are personally present with you,—as they were personally present with the writers of the Bible, the actors in the scenes which it records,—as indeed they are personally present with all writers and all actors,—the same Word, the same Spirit, amid whatever diversities of gifts, the same to all. Under

the guidance of this Word, this Spirit, thus personally with you, the documents of Scripture and the facts of the universe, including all inspirations old and new, will yield to you what in them is at once divine and human; and out of the apparently miscellaneous mass of materials there will come forth a consistent and harmonious unity of faith. This may or may not be a correct summary of what the author would tell the young men whose case he pities. It is not very easy to fix his somewhat vague generalities in any definite statement. It may fairly be inferred from them, however, that he recognises no inspiration in the Scriptures as revealing the will of God, different from what he finds in any of the other means,—such as the facts of the universe or the insights of gifted genius,—by which God more or less clearly discovers himself to men with whom his Word and his Spirit are always present. And in fact the author makes this clear when he says to us, not only “you must give up the attempt to impose a theory of inspiration upon them,”—but “you must very gravely consider whether the one which you hold is compatible with that *belief* in inspiration which belonged to prophets and apostles.” (P. 342.) Does not this again bring out the ‘*ignoratio elenchi*,’—the confounding of the question at issue? Plainly the author confuses two things together,—the belief which prophets and apostles had in their own inspiration, and our belief in the inspiration of them and of their sayings. And just as plainly may it thus appear, that the real point in debate

is not a theory of inspiration,—plenary or partial,—verbal or ideal,—but the authority of the Bible as a revelation of the mind and will of God,—a communication from him to his creatures, of the very same nature with the communication which any one of these creatures might make to another.

The author, at this stage, conjures up the vision of “some critic,” who taunts him with “putting forward these young men” to cover his own “secret unbelief about the books of the Bible,” and coarsely proposes to “apply the screw,” to make “this tenet of inspiration” more stringent for his apparent “wincing.” “I wish,” he cries, “my friend the critic would look me as steadily in the face” while he says this, “as I would look him in the face while I replied.” The reply is somewhat to this effect; “I am conscious of just as much unbelief about the books of the Bible, as I am about the facts of nature and of my own existence. These oftentimes seem to me quite incredible. I turn to the Bible as the interpretation of them. It is the resolver of my perplexities. I find many things in it which I do not understand; many more in myself. I cannot part with these documents; they become more and more necessary with every advance of civilization and every new complication of my feelings and circumstances. Books of the Bible become clearer as I meet with hard passages in myself or in society which I cannot construe without them; all the more, the more I rest my faith on the God whom

the Bible declares to me, and not on conclusions respecting the authenticity of different books. These I hope may be sound. But apart from their soundness or unsoundness, I must be allowed first of all to accept the canon of Scripture as given to me, and, secondly, to rise gradually to believe, not on the authority of any Samaritan woman or Church doctor, but because I have heard Christ for myself, speaking to me out of this book, and speaking to me in my heart, and therefore know that he is indeed that Saviour who should come into the world." Thus the author faces his critic. (Pp. 342-344.)

It is a beautiful account that he gives of one of the ways in which the Bible proves itself to be divine. He has often in his other works shewn himself a master in the practical illustration of it. Few men can so exquisitely blend in one the elements of life in those ancient Jewish records, and the elements of life in men's hearts and homes and streets and cities now. He describes here the course which any man of common sense, young or old, would follow in studying the Bible. I take it at first as my parents, as "the traditions of my country," give it to me. I read it, believing and praying. I go to it in my perplexities, whether these arise from within or from without. Above all, I go to it when a sense of guilt overwhelms me,—and strong corruption, unholy desire, uncharitable passion, mean selfishness in me, drives me almost to despair,—when the idea of having offended my righteous Lord, my loving Father,



makes all the heaven above me as brass, and hardens my heart as iron. It is my refuge then. And as a bright ray of love begins gradually to illuminate its thoughts and words, and there comes forth out of it a living Saviour, telling what he is to the Father and what he is to me, how he does the Father's will and meets my case,—I know that the doctrine is of God,—I have a persuasion, which criticism can neither greatly strengthen nor shake, that the Scriptures, which testify of Him in whom I have eternal life, are the book of God.

But the question remains,—What is it that by either of these processes is gained ? And what is the real, valid evidence for the result reached ? The author's reverence and love for the Bible may far exceed mine ; as far as his power of identifying its incidents and characters with common experience exceeds mine. Still I may be forced to ask, What do you hold the Bible to be ? It is the prince of books. It stands alone as a revelation of God. But is it God revealing himself exactly as I reveal myself in the volume which I am now publishing ? No doubt, I reveal myself otherwise, in many ways. Any who think it worth their while may watch my proceedings and the proceedings of those whom I influence, and may gather up from many quarters a thousand incidental traces of my character and will. But if I commit myself to a document which I undertake to authenticate as containing my real mind, then in proportion as you trust me, I ask you to stand by that. It may be difficult of



interpretation ; it may be multiform and multifarious ; but it may be all that I can give you as a direct communication of my will ; and I trust to your affection to make the most of it. Precisely on this footing, whatever may have been the process of conviction in my mind, I receive the Bible from God. I receive it exactly as I would desire a friend who trusted me to receive a paper, or a bundle of papers, from me. I look into the papers as I receive them from God. If I find in them any hints as to the manner in which they have been composed, or as to the manner in which they should be interpreted and applied, I avail myself of the information. But I cannot consent to confound them in one mass with what I may infer from my own consciousness, or from my observation of the other works and ways of their Author, and to call the whole a revelation. In particular, when I wish to know what is his real character and what are his fixed plans, I must be permitted to take his own account of them, in his own book, as a communication from himself of an essentially different character from all the conclusions to which I might otherwise come. There may be questions as to how I am to verify the communication, or how I am to identify it as genuine, or how I am to interpret it with all its manifold embarrassment of riches. But I cannot allow any such questions to be made handles for destroying the distinctive character of the communication itself,—which is this, that it is not merely the revelation, in the

sense of being the one *par excellence* among many,—but the one only revelation in which God breaks the solemn silence of nature and providence, and actually speaks through chosen messengers, in the language of men, to the understanding of men.

There is a note here, (p. 344) which might suggest a treatise. It is really the only part of the Essay which fairly touches even a corner of the subject of inspiration. It refers, among other things, to the difficulties connected with our holding that narratives of facts are inspired. The author takes a common fact, “that such a city was taken at such a time.” He thinks it “far safer, more scriptural, more Godly, to suppose that” the writers of the Bible, being honest men and “possessed by the Spirit of Truth,” took pains, and were “taught by the Spirit to *take pains*, in sifting facts, than to suppose that they were merely told the facts.” Surely this is strange ignorance or inattention. No one supposes that inspired men, revealing God’s will, were “merely told the facts” or truths which they were commissioned to record. Of course, they were moved to take pains, to sift facts, to avail themselves of existing records and traditionary songs, to use their faculties in every way, just as any writer or speaker having access to various sources of knowledge would do. Inspiration supersedes none of these exercises of inquiry and thought; it assumes them all. This, indeed, occasions the real difficulty; a difficulty which such men as the author might do much to solve,

if only they could join in the belief that what the Bible says, however the writers of it may have been guided, is to be received, according to the fair, scholar-like interpretation of it, as said by God. That interpretation must be regulated by the usual canons applicable to manuscripts which have stood the wear and tear of centuries; with free scope to purge and correct; to theorize, if need be, on the probable human sources of ideas and histories; to allow for minute inaccuracies, as well as for insoluble difficulties and doubts. The advocates of inspiration,—even of verbal inspiration,—have no objection whatever to cast the Bible unreservedly into the crucible of exegetical and antiquarian analysis; and they are not very careful though the result should be, along with the explanation of many old puzzles, the raising of some new ones. Like the author, they accept the Scriptures upon deeper evidence than what the shifting discoveries or conjectures of the day can unsettle. They accept them, however, as having an authority exclusively their own,—as being in themselves alone, apart from all other grounds of divine knowledge and belief, the authentic record of the one revelation which God has given, to tell us, as one man tells another, what his mind and will are.

This is no “theory of inspiration, taking the place, not only of faith in inspiration, but of faith in God.” It is no attempt to take better “care of his truth, his book, his creatures, and the universe,” than he does himself.

It is no "pretty toy for men at leisure to play with ;"—like the author's clever pun upon the word "*plenary*." "I object to the inspiration which people talk of, for being too empty, not for being too full." That is a pun or "pretty toy," certainly "not made so hard as to do mischief." The "use of it," therefore, is not "to be checked." "But it does not belong to business." When men are "struggling with life and death,"—"wanting a book of life,"—it is not enough to "have courage to tell them," as the author does, "that there is a Spirit with them, who will guide them into the truth of it ;"—which is all he has to say, and which, so far as it goes, may be good. (Pp. 345, 346.) You must be able to tell them also that the book itself is God speaking to them, as really and literally as a friend speaks to them, when they are reading his letter or receiving the message he may have commissioned a servant to convey ;—and that they may rely on what they find to be the fair import of the communication,—the Spirit who inspired it being with them,—as confidently as if they stood like Abraham in the plains of Mamre conversing face to face with Jehovah, or like John in the isle of Patmos hearing 'a voice as of a trumpet, as the sound of many waters.'

"These words being openly proclaimed,"—that there is a Spirit with men guiding them into the truth of the book of life,—the author represents certain parties as taking alarm ; anticipating a flood of vulgar, ranting fanaticism. He thus passes into the next particular in his review of the current theories of inspiration.

4. He would not by any means try to weaken the influence of fanatics "by telling them that the Bible is the inspired book; that it is utterly absurd and extravagant for men in these days to call themselves inspired." That plan has been tried; but tried in vain. Nay, "what is worse, this kind of treatment has destroyed precious seeds which God has planted in men's hearts, and which they cannot afford to lose." He would tell "the deceiver" claiming inspiration, that "instead of a mere power of utterance, for which he will have to give an account, the Spirit who has endued him with that power is near him, claiming him as a servant; and near every one of those whom he is making his tools." In other words, he would substitute an inspiration common to both for an inspiration peculiar to "the great prophet." And in that way, apparently, he would separate "the chaff in their minds from the wheat." (Pp. 346-348.)

5. The Church of England, also, he thinks, will best fulfil her "honourable function" of witnessing against fanaticism, not "by setting at nought all belief in spiritual operations, referring all that is spoken of them in Scripture to the age of the apostles," nor by "setting up the Bible as a book which incloses all that may lawfully be called inspiration;"—but by "saying to our countrymen, of every order and degree, 'The Father of all has sent forth his Son, made of a woman, that you may receive the adoption of sons. He has baptized you with the Spirit of his Son: and that Spirit would claim all things for you; common books and the chief

book, nature and grace, earth and heaven.'” (P. 349.) He is in you: he is in all things; in the chief book especially.

Here again the author confounds the work of the Holy Spirit in the manufacture of a revelation, if the expression may be allowed, with the work of the Holy Spirit as he enables us to study and understand the revelation. He mixes up the Bible with “common books,” with “nature,” and whatever may be embraced under the term “earth,” as all alike contributing to form the revelation. He does not admit the Bible to have an authority, as the Book of God, essentially different in kind from what belongs to other books, or to the discoveries of our own minds.

He assigns, indeed, to the Bible a high pre-eminence; and in the close of this Essay, he uses language which seems to draw a definite line of distinction. His subject being “not merely inspiration, but the inspiration of the Bible,” he has a parting word to say to “the new Unitarian school.” “Where their fathers honoured the letter, they perceive a divine mind in the old seers. But they do not half so much accept them as *teachers*.” In short, they think that they are wiser, and that they must be so, “if the world is always advancing.” This tendency is “not in general fairly met.” The author meets it by referring to “physical science;” by asserting the law of the Baconian method, and asking, “Is it altogether otherwise in moral science?” He does not



think so. He tells us he has been "forced to inquire whether that old notion of a Bible," "which sets forth a revelation that is complete and cannot receive additions from our researches,—is unfavourable to science, to discovery, to progress; nay, may not be the necessary protection of all three." (P. 353.)

Now, apart from its bearing upon science, discovery, and progress, how far is "that old notion" the true one? And what, according to that notion, is the inspiration of the Bible? What authority has the Bible, in this view of it, as a rule of faith and manners? How is that authority to be brought to bear on the fixing of our belief and the regulation of our conduct? These questions the author does not pause to consider. But he states his conviction that moral science gains certainty, light, and hope, when we resort to the Bible in the spirit of the physical student who "has exchanged the syllogisms of the study for the induction of the laboratory." 1. In the Bible "God has declared himself; he has withdrawn the veil which hides him from his creatures; he has in a wonderful and orderly history enabled us to see what he is, and what he is to us." We thus find in the Bible "divine and human science." 2. As "he who reveals himself is light," there are "perpetual openings for discovery." 3. "The Bible also contains a promise of progress,—a promise which has been most fulfilled when it has been most reverently listened to." (P. 354.)



Such language might almost satisfy the most devout believers in the exclusive divine authority of the Bible. They might be startled, perhaps, by what follows, and might ask what the author means when he represents certain parties as “believing that they know all that is in the Bible, and merely resorting to it for sentences and watchwords to confirm their own notions and to condemn their brethren.” The author’s idea must be, that in whatever manner the Bible is to be used as containing discoveries which God has made of himself,—as in that way furnishing materials for a divine and human science,—and whatever peculiar character may attach to it in that light,—it is not to be made really a test and definite standard of opinion. We may come to it “as learners;” and “it has more to teach us yet than we can ask or think.” But if we conclude that we have ascertained its meaning, and that it confirms certain notions which we in consequence adopt and hold, while necessarily it condemns the opposite notions which some other people may hold, we are uncharitable and wrong. “God will shew us,—he is shewing us,—how great the punishment to us and to our children must be, for abusing the unspeakably precious treasure with which he has endowed us.” (P. 354.)

The apostle Paul speaks of those who are ‘ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;’ and this apparently is the position in which the author would keep us. If he says, No; I only mean that you can as little exhaust the Bible in your study of

it, as you can exhaust nature in your physical researches;—that is true. But then, in the first place, we do not hesitate to believe and say, that our physical researches have so far ascertained the meaning of what nature teaches as to make it certain that nature confirms certain notions, and condemns others. And in the second place, the question still remains,—Have we, or have we not, in the Bible, a communication from God to men, of the same kind with that which one man, in various writings, may make to another? If so, then our business is to interpret the Bible just as we would interpret other books, with a view to discover what God means to tell us in it, about himself and us. This may be called a process of induction. It is the sort of induction by which we gather from the voluminous works of an author what his teaching really is,—what information he intends us to receive,—what opinions he would have us, on his authority, to form,—what practices he would have us to follow. It is that, and nothing more. If, on the other hand, the Bible is regarded as one of many sources from which the materials of divine and human science are drawn,—it may be the best source,—it may be the most complete and authentic collection,—it may be such a collection as cannot now receive any additions of the same nature and value. And it may enter largely as an element into a process of induction more analogous than the other to the induction of physical science. But as an authoritative divine standard of what men are to believe concerning God, and what duty

they owe to him,—it becomes, to use the words which the author applies in another connexion, “the dream of a shadow.”

#### ESSAY XIV.—ON THE PERSONALITY AND TEACHING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The author states at the outset the difficulty to be met. It is the difference between “the hopes which Scripture seems to hold out of the effects that should follow the revelation of Christ,” and “the history of the world since he appeared in it.” The difficulty is “felt more strongly now than formerly, for several reasons ;” of which two are mentioned. The old world, with its excellences as well as its crimes,—and the new world, with its faults as well as its graces,—have been more fairly laid alongside of one another. And men are asking, “Where is the great alteration?” Nay, “in some respects, is there not a change for the worse?”—new “crimes canonized”—“old virtues disparaged?” Then again, we have ceased to be satisfied with being told that Christ was merely a teacher of morals and a worker of miracles. If he had been nothing more, the comparative failure of Christianity would have been as easily accounted for, as the impotency of other systems of preceding teachers. But we have taught men now to expect a power, as well as a rule. We have spoken to them of “a dispensation of *the Spirit*,” as that which

“our Lord’s coming in the flesh” was to introduce. And we thus “give every one a right to ask us some searching questions ;—‘ A divine Spirit has been given to men, for the purpose of moulding their lives into conformity with the law which has been proclaimed to them. Surely, then, you are bound to shew some evidence of that conformity.’ ” Nor will it do to speak of the incredulity of men, or the power of “ a world, or flesh, or devil,” unless “ you mean that there has not been a power which could overcome ” them all,—being the power of God. (Pp. 355-359.)

The difficulty is “evaded” in “several ways.” In the first place, some point to “fruits of faith and love” among those who have owned this influence, distinguishing them from those who do not. This is too narrow and exclusive a view. “The story of the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and of the signs which accompanied it, and of the preaching which followed it, must be thrown aside altogether, if no blessing was then vouchsafed to *mankind*.” Secondly, some say that the universal benefit is the completed canon of the inspired Scriptures. That, certainly, will not do. “Lapses,” in the third place, explaining reformatations and revivals, will not meet the promise ; occasional movements do not come up to the assurance of “ a Spirit who shall abide with the disciples for ever.” Nor, fourthly, will it do to bring in the “spiritual nature of man” as the explanation. The Montanist notion, “that the Com-

forter was a bodily teacher," and that "Montanus himself was the fulfiller of the promise," must also be set aside, although it had plausibility enough to secure the support of Tertullian. It has often appeared since, and is very likely, it seems, to appear now. It may therefore suggest the consideration "why it has seemed to those who entertained it, to answer more exactly to our Lord's language than any mere notion of an invisible influence?" The author admits that "such an influence is continually spoken of in Scripture under the symbols of 'rain' and 'dew.'" But he asks, "What is there in such symbols which corresponds to these words?"—the words being our Lord's assurance respecting the Comforter,—"'he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.'"

Thus the doctrine of the personality and work of the Holy Spirit is ushered in. (Pp. 360-363.)

Nor can anything well be stronger than the assertion of his personality, founded upon that text in the Gospel by John. "All here is personal in the strictest sense;" so much so that we need not wonder at Tertullian's adoption of the Montanist opinion. "Vexed by Gnostic teachers," who "have no associations with spirit" except "moisture or vapour,"—who "do habitually confound it with vapour, and do not even attach to vapour that sense of power which the sight of a locomotive engine suggests to us,"—Tertullian, "with his fierce African nature," is "very likely to adopt a coarse

material counterpart of reality." But we now know—from what Christ has shewn us in reference to himself,—from the evil spirit tempting him and us "in no bodily shape,"—and from the worship which God requires as "a Person and a Father,"—that a body does not constitute personality; so that "we shall accept the words" quoted from John "in the most liberal sense when we take them in their most spiritual sense." The question concerning the relation of the Person of the Comforter to the Son, and to the Father, is reserved for a future Essay. Meanwhile, "acknowledging this Spirit as a Person," we are to "accept our Lord's account of his work," as the "solution of the difficulty with which" the author "started." (Pp. 364, 365.)

This work of the Spirit is traced in the feelings and views which prevail in the modern world, as compared with those prevailing formerly, on the subjects of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

It is important here to bear in mind what the difficulty really is, and whence it arises. The author's assumption amounts to this, that nothing but a benefit absolutely universal can fulfil the anticipations which prophets and apostles entertained themselves, and led men to cherish, on the subject of the dispensation of the Spirit. He connects that dispensation with the ascension of Christ. He speaks of it as "a mighty gift bestowed upon God's creature as soon as that creature was capable of receiving it." (P. 362.) The ascension vindicated our "position



and capacities” as “spiritual beings,” and so made us capable of receiving the gift of the Spirit. The author strangely quotes in support of this view what John says, ‘The Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified;’ omitting the previous words, ‘This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.’ Surely in that passage, as well as in the saying of Paul which he considers parallel to it,—‘The Spirit witnesseth with our spirit that we are the sons of God,’—something different from a privilege common to all, whether they believe or not, is indicated. Let it, however, be allowed for the sake of argument to be so; and to what does it amount?

The expectation men were taught by prophets and apostles to form “pointed not merely to the manifestation of a great King, but also to the manifestation of him from whom their thoughts and impulses had proceeded.” The ascension of Christ, being the exaltation of human nature, vindicates our spiritual position and spiritual capacities. The gift bestowed upon us in consequence would seem to be that anticipated manifestation of the Spirit. The Spirit being thus manifested, his work among men,—elevated *en masse* as spiritual beings by the ascension of Christ,—issues in the formation of a public opinion, or in the production of a habit of thought and feeling, with reference to ‘sin, righteousness, and judgment,’ different from what prevailed before.

It is not easy to make more of the author’s language.



And really, if this is all, it does not differ much practically from the theory which traces the promised presence of the Comforter in the beneficial influence which the spirit of the gospel, and the completed canon of Scripture, have exercised on the general mind of Christendom. It is true the author goes on in the following Essay to speak of another work or manifestation of the Spirit, different from that of convincing the world; he speaks of his "coming and dwelling in" the Church. That, however, is rather analogous, as may be shewn presently, to those more special influences of the Spirit which may be said to 'accompany salvation.' For the present, let it be observed that the 'conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment,' which the author finds in the altered feelings of the modern world upon these subjects, is as poor an accomplishment of the large promise about the mighty gift, as any of those which he himself with just severity condemns.

'But does not our Lord's assurance that the Comforter shall convince and reprove the world refer to the dispensation of the Spirit, and to its universality? If not, what do you make of it?' Certainly, our Lord speaks of the Spirit's work in the minds and consciences of men generally and indiscriminately. But he speaks of it in immediate connexion with the bearing of a testimony for him, or in other words, with the proclamation of the gospel. He tells the disciples that they are to be his witnesses in a world which will not receive their sayings,

which will persecute them as it persecuted him. But for their encouragement he tells them further, that in that very world the Spirit is to be at work, testifying of him. When therefore you bear witness of Christ to men, the Spirit will be bearing witness also; moving inwardly the understandings and moral feelings of those to whom you address your appeal; so that, pricked in their consciences, cut to the heart, they shall 'not be able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which you speak.' This is our Lord's promise to his disciples. It was this that gave them courage in facing a hostile world and labouring to 'win souls to Christ.' It is this which gives courage to every faithful man still, when as a witness for Christ he deals with his fellow-men. If he is a man of faith and prayer, he knows that, take the world at its very worst,—not as leavened more or less by Christianity,—but as sunk even in Patagonian darkness and horrid cruelty,—whenever he speaks of Christ to any, he has not merely to rely for success on the response which natural reason and conscience may make; he has a fellow-witness accompanying him; the Spirit is working among these men and in them, all the while that he is teaching and persuading them. And hence he perseveres, hoping against hope;—'his speech and his preaching being not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'

This is surely a presence, a manifestation or work

of the Spirit, more practical and effectual than that which the author recognises; and if it is not equally wide and universal, it is at least as much so as the call of the gospel itself. But indeed, even as regards this condition of universality, where is the difference? I say that whenever Christianity comes in contact with the hearts and consciences of men, there is warrant to expect an accompanying movement of the Spirit in their hearts and consciences. It is a movement which causes them to bear even unwilling testimony to the truth that fastens upon them the guilt of sin, especially of the sin of unbelief. And it makes them feel, moreover, that the righteousness which is in Christ for them, and the judgment which, having overtaken the world's prince, must be impending over the world whose prince he is, are realities. Do I thus restrict either the prediction or its fulfilment any more than if I find the promise fulfilled in the general Christian sentiment of modern times? I certainly make the conviction which the Spirit produces more definite and precise. I connect the Spirit's work more immediately with the exhibition of Christ and of his work. I suppose conviction of sin to be a sense of personal guilt and condemnation, aggravated by the discovery of a Saviour in whom I have not believed. I suppose conviction of righteousness to be a persuasion of his having made good a valid ground for my justification before he went to the Father. I suppose conviction of judgment to be the belief wrought in me at last, that

exemption from penal retribution is as impossible for Satan's subjects, the servants of sin, as it is proved to be for Satan himself. I believe that this is the conviction to effect which the Holy Spirit is promised and given, in connexion with whatever faithful testimony is borne for Christ, anywhere, anyhow, by any one man to any other man. And I trace Pentecostal conversions, Lutheran reformations, Methodist revivals, whatever success attends the ordinary means and ministry of grace, whatever change is wrought by whatever instrumentality among any people with whom a lover of Christ and a lover of his fellows may be dealing,—I trace all to this wide, unrestricted, comprehensive promise, 'He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.'

The author's view of this work of the Spirit is, of course, in harmony with his previous discussion of these three topics. According to him, the experience, the consciousness, the instinct or craving which he finds in all men, upon each of these topics,—especially now that Christ has been manifested in his incarnation, his life and death, his resurrection and ascension,—is associated intimately with the actual presence of a person, the Comforter, the Spirit whom every man has,—who moves and influences all. It is not necessary to follow him here in detail. 1. On the subject of sin, he refers to his second Essay; and brings out again, on the one hand our discovery of evil as personal to ourselves, beneath legal transgressions and customary habits; and on the other

hand, our instinct of resistance to evil, as a foreign foe. The harmony of these consciousnesses he finds in the doctrine that the Comforter convinces the world 'of sin because they believe not in Christ ;'—in Christ, in whom the Spirit leads men "to a knowledge of what they are according to that separate, unnatural, immoral condition which they have imagined for themselves, and of what they are according to the true and blessed order which God has established for them." 2. On the subject, again, of righteousness, the author indulges in severe remarks on "apparent objections" to the statement he sets out with, "that there has been a higher standard of righteousness" in the new world than in the old. "The love of city and country" has been disparaged, "the relations of civil and social life" condemned or degraded, a "mean self-righteousness" fostered,—by a spurious "elevation of the Christian standard," and false "spiritual and ecclesiastical maxims." "Above all, the fearful contradictions which have gathered about the idea of sacrifice," countenancing intense selfishness,—as well as "the horrible notion" of subordinating truth to the safety of the soul, nay making it "merely a means to safety,"—are conspicuous beyond example in "the acts and conceptions of Christian men." Still, even these horrors are counterbalanced by "such an idea of a universal fellowship," such self-denial and charity, such strong adherence to truth,—and that, too, among the humblest and feeblest, as the best among the ancients

could but faintly grasp. Men have been "lifted up," often by painful discipline, "to feel that there was a perfect righteousness, a universal self-sacrificing love, an eternal truth, of which they were inheritors." The "standard" of these graces has been "exhibited by a man carrying mortal flesh, dying a death which we die." He "has gone out of sight." But there is a voice whispering at men's hearts, "That righteousness which was seen here, is now yours." This is the Comforter enabling men to realize what Christ was and is, and what humanity is in him. Finally, 3. The judgment of which the world is to be convinced, is connected with the feelings of mingled awe and expectation that fill the hearts of men as they contemplate the discriminating and searching process of discovery now going forward; the victory of the good over the evil being guaranteed by the defeat which the evil power has already sustained.

Thus the author traces the universal presence and work of the Spirit, now that, according to him, the Holy Ghost is given because Christ is glorified. He is the living personal witness of humanity's participation in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. The author contrasts this view with the others noticed by him at the outset,—setting aside in favour of it, or superseding by means of it, such theories as speak of "a gracious influence stealing into certain gentle, prepared, believing hearts,"—or of the Bible,—or of lapses,—or of spiritual movements in men themselves,—as equivalent to the promised Spirit. There are some perversions of the com-



mon evangelical doctrine in what he says : but there is also much truth and point. Certainly, nothing but the actual presence of a living Divine Person, dealing personally with men in their inmost thoughts and feelings, can either fulfil the terms of the promise or meet the exigency of the case. It may be doubted, however, whether this is so clear according to the author's account of the Spirit's work with reference to the world, as it is according to that which represents the Spirit as seconding, by an inward operation upon the conscience and the will, an express outward testimony concerning actual guilt, a present justifying righteousness, a coming retribution. One can conceive of a man reasoning thus ; ' It is all very well to assure me that there is a Holy Spirit attesting to me the regeneration and elevation of humanity, the ultimate triumph of good over evil. But I feel now, as I never felt before, my sin in not believing in Christ ; the fulness and perfection of his righteous doings and sufferings in my stead ; the impossibility, if I neglect this great salvation, of escape from the penal sentence which sin deserves.' That, to my mind, is a clearer and more practical accomplishment of our Lord's saying than the other ; it better " solves the problem of my own heart." And it gives me better hope in dealing with the hearts of others. It is no experience peculiar to myself. I rely upon its being common to them also. I plead the promise in prayer to my Saviour on behalf of every man ; and upon the faith of it, I go to every man to bear witness to him of Jesus.



## ESSAY XV.—ON THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

This Essay the author connects with the preceding, at the close of which he says, "The unity of the Spirit,—as making us true and making us one—and what is involved in it, I reserve for my next subject." The work of the Spirit in convincing the world, ought to issue in unity. How it may do so, how it does so, is the point for consideration now. A unity of some sort the Spirit must surely either manifest or create. It is in this necessity that the original idea of a Church lies. Hence the propriety of discussing the subject of "the unity of the Spirit" under the title of "the unity of the Church."

"The great difficulty for those who compare the promises of the New Testament with the history of Christendom," confessedly "still remains," even after the words of our Lord which "speak of a *world*, not of a *Church*," have been commented on. And "there is a very distinct obligation laid upon us all to explain what we understand by the language of Scripture respecting the gift of the Spirit and the foundation of the Church, and how we suppose the records of the world, and the world which we see, can be explained in accordance with it."

The author cannot, of course, consent to the opinion, "that the New Testament promises certain spiritual blessings to individuals, but that it does not connect the

gift of the Spirit with a society." The connexion of the later with the earlier records turns upon their describing "the expansion of a national society into a human and universal society." The expectations of the apostles, the decisive events of the day of Pentecost, the "unity and holiness," as well as the power and organization, of the new society established in the name of Christ at Jerusalem and confessing the Spirit to be with it, the forming of societies all over the Gentile world,—“everything,” in short, “in the Old and New Testament, speaks of fellowship and organization.” “A kingdom had come forth, which, however apparently insignificant, was instinct with a Spirit that would enable it to rule the nations.” (Pp. 382–386.)

But then, how are we “to face the problems which the world, as we see it, presents to us?” Are we “to save the credit of inspiration by resorting to fictions?” —“by assuming, for instance, that forms and professions constitute a Church,—that external badges mean the same thing as an indwelling Spirit?” The author hopes to “be preserved from any such wicked trifling.”

He passes in review before him the principal societies which have assumed the name and character of the Church of Christ.

1. He begins with the “body which affirms itself to be the one Holy Catholic Church of the world.” He enumerates at considerable length the grounds on which it rests its claims,—“miraculous powers,—uninterrupted

descent,—infallible authority,—fixed dogmas,—adaptation to circumstances,—a band of saints.” Such arguments he does not care to refute. He calls for more of holiness and unity ;—a holiness which will make “ this society in which I dwell,”—this country, these human beings, holy ;—a unity which shall not have in it “ contrarieties of belief,” “ immoral heathenish superstitions,” “ contemptuous infidelity,” “ muttered discontent.” And he asks concerning “ the body ” in question, “ Can this be that Church which began when a *Spirit* of unity took possession of a body of men, allowing them to retain their *external* differences, because they had that *within* which made them one?” (Pp. 387–392.)

2. “ Protestant nations ” are next tried ; and with an acknowledged improvement in many things among them, as compared with those which “ only breathe a sacerdotal atmosphere,” they are nevertheless set aside as “ altogether unspiritual and secular.” The lower classes may be “ less superstitious than in Romish countries.” But “ what spiritual influence has been exerted over them ? ” The higher classes may not be priest-ridden. But is it not upon the tacit understanding that “ the priest shall abdicate his functions as a spiritual reprovcr, and shall be content to be reckoned a safety-valve of the social machine, or as some insignificant accessory to it, which no one will disturb until it begin to move ? ” Alas ! too true is the author’s picture ; and too conclusive his question,—“ Is it here that we

are to look for a Holy Catholic Church ; can we find tokens here that a Spirit of holiness and love is dwelling among men ? ” The cure for this sad and sinful state of things may well be matter of serious inquiry. Meanwhile, the society we are in quest of is at all events not discovered in the Protestant nations. (Pp. 392-394.)

3. Perhaps there may be some “ relief ” in turning “ to a number of particular societies,” or “ spiritual sects.” “ The student . . . must needs be attracted by their statements, not only because they point out evils which he has himself noticed in their opponents, but because they affirm that the true spiritual principle is with them.” It is this,—“ the Church must be a body of men chosen out of the world,”—“ drawn by a Divine Spirit to confess a Divine Lord.” “ What data can sound more hopeful than these ? ” And the author cordially acknowledges that “ the early history of all sects,”—gives proof of “ a Spirit,—yes, the Spirit of truth, having been among these men ; their sect would not have survived them for a century, or even a year, if it had been merely gathered for a purpose of spite or faction.” But soon he hears “ deep groans arising from the midst of these sects,”—“ complaints ” that they are “ formal and worldly,” “ restrainers of moral freedom,” “ bitter against each other and seldom at peace within.” “ Can we then find among these sects the resemblance of that Church of which St Paul spake as being one body, into which all had been baptized by one Spirit ? ”

(Pp. 395, 396.) Very probably not. And yet we may find among these sects, and among men in national Churches, too, and in the so-called Catholic Church, "the true spiritual principle," upon which the unity of the body of Christ,—the unity of the Spirit,—depends.

The author now himself proceeds to deal with the knot very boldly. He seems indeed to be sunk in despondency, almost amounting to despair,—as if the only refuge from all this "conflict, strife, contradiction, in those who bear the name of one Lord" were the belief that "men are not spiritual beings,"—that they "have no ties to each other except such as are produced by outward animal necessities." But on a sudden he passes at once to bright hope. He finds "that facts which he has been pondering offer the most decisive witness for, not against, the law which was proclaimed on the day of Pentecost; for, not against, the assertion that it is the law of human society,—the one by which society *is* governed,—however much men may be denying it or rebelling against it." (P. 398.) To shew how this is, the parties already examined are recalled.

1. The "Church which boasts to be One, Holy, Catholic," has erred and sinned because she has been false to her own boast. She professes to have faith "in an indwelling Spirit, a Spirit of truth, and love, and power, which is to bind all together in one and enable her to rule the nations." She should not, therefore, have had recourse to "the practices of the conjuror,"—"of the

diplomatist,"—"of the hard-hearted worldly oppressor," "when she was sent to tell men of a Father who had claimed them as his sons, of a Son who was at his right hand for them, of a Spirit who was within them to make them inheritors of his glory." (P. 399.)

2. "Protestant National Churches" have erred from "the same unbelief,"—unbelief in not confessing in deed, as well as in words, "that a Spirit has appeared to build up a one Holy Catholic Church." All that is good in them, as well as in Rome, is to be imputed to that faith. They have not "erred from their too great patriotism" or nationality; still less "from their fixed purpose that no religion whatever should rob them of their common morality." "They have erred in not thinking that the Spirit of God was with them," to maintain, purify, and enlarge these excellent practical virtues, national and social. (P. 401.)

3. Sects, again, have not been wrong in believing what their forefathers told them, "that the Spirit was seeking to bind them in one." No; "this lesson taken home to the heart, makes men first true, in due time Catholic, leading them to cling mightily to the special conviction God has wrought in them, afterwards enabling them to feel the necessity of other convictions to sustain that." But they have lost this faith, and substituted some petty external badge and symbol of theirs, for the belief and confession of a Divine Spirit. Hence they are "impatient of dogmas, yet fiercely dogmatic;



eager to rob other men of their treasures ; feeble in their hold upon their own." And their sons are asking, "whether the earth has no other foundations than those which the sects have laid?"—often thinking sadly that "its foundations are built on rottenness." (P. 402.)

But courage ! An Atlas comes. At last we are to have an answer to the inquiry—"how a Church differs from a world?" It is an answer which is to serve the purpose better than "all artificial definitions ;" being, in fact, what "Romanists, Protestant nations, all sects" agree in declaring. It is in substance this : There is a body of Christ, and there is a Spirit dwelling in that body. "Their words bear witness of it ; their crimes, which outrage those words, bear witness of it still more." (P. 403.) One is half inclined to exclaim, 'When they do agree, their unanimity is wonderful !'

How, then, does a Church differ from a world ? "' *The Comforter*,' our Lord says, '*shall convince the world.*' When he speaks to the disciples, he says, '*He shall come and dwell in you.*'" The contrast is correct, although this last sentence, quoted as from Scripture, is a singular specimen of compression. What the Lord says to the disciples concerning the Comforter, in his farewell discourses recorded by John, is about ten times more than what he says on that subject, still to the disciples, when he has the world in his view. And perhaps these discourses, with the prayer that follows them, might shed some light on this question about "a Church differing



from a world,"—if we could place ourselves in the position of the eleven, on that eventful night, and understand simply, as they must have understood them, the words then uttered to them, and for them. But to proceed; "The world contains the elements of which the Church is composed. In the Church, these elements are penetrated by a uniting, reconciling power. The Church is, therefore, human society in its normal state; the world, that same society irregular and abnormal. The world is the Church without God; the Church is the world restored to its relation with God, taken back by him into the state for which he created it." (P. 404.)

Of course "the world contains the elements of which the Church is composed," if by these elements we understand human beings. Of course, also, "the world restored to its relation with God" would be the Church. The author does not apparently hold that this consummation has yet been actually attained. How, then, in the mean time, "does a Church differ from a world?" The world confessedly not being "taken back by God into the state for which he created it,"—at least not *de facto*, whatever it may be *de jure*,—is there a society which is?

The author may retort the question;—Do you say that there is? Assuredly we do. What! A society composed of different elements from those which the world contains? No; of the very same,—of the worst and vilest of the world's elements. Can you shew it to us, then, in the communion of Rome, or of national Churches, or

of sects? It is in all; it may be seen in all; but we do not profess to shew it. Who, then? The Holy Spirit. He, and he alone, both forms and manifests this society. And let not priest, or prelate, or presbyter, or essayist, interfere with his prerogative, either by presuming to define the society by outward marks, or by maintaining that because it cannot be so defined, it does not exist.

But is not this the old story of an invisible Church having its place in heaven? Certainly it is an old story. Only it is the story of a Church on earth; its members are living men and women. Yes; but it is the Church invisible. No; it is visible; it may be seen by any eye that earnestly and candidly looks for it. Then, it can be defined and marked out? No; that does not follow. There may be palpable enough evidence that the Holy Spirit is gathering out of all peoples and nations and kindreds and tongues, a pure and holy society;—a regenerated family;—although it may be neither possible nor lawful to limit it by any bounds of creed, confession, country,—or to say precisely who are and who are not within its pale.

This is the doctrine which really asserts the personality, and personal agency, of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine that he is in the world; dealing personally and individually with its inhabitants, one by one; effecting a change of nature and character in them, one by one; and forming thus a body of persons renovated by his personal dealing with them; a body one and universal; one in Christ the Lord; universal, unrestricted, as is the

wind which bloweth where it listeth. Its unity and universality are real, although they may not be fully felt and known until the whole company is assembled, complete, before the throne of God and of the Lamb.

But then, in your way of representing it, there is no order, — government, — organization ; such as enabled “ the society at Jerusalem to meet the lie of Ananias and Sapphira, and the murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews ; ” and such as we usually associate with the idea of a Church on earth. (P. 385.) Nay, there is at least as much room for all that under the view now suggested, — the view commonly held by evangelical “divines,” — as under that of the author. Whatever place he finds in his system for the rules and rites, — the discipline and administration, — of an external ecclesiastical association, — we find the very same place for them in ours. We may differ as to what they are, and as to the authority on which they rest. He may perhaps think that the regulation of them is less fixed by Christ, and left more to the discretion of men, than we might admit ; or the reverse may be the state of the case between us. At all events, any difference of that sort is not material here. The author’s idea of “ a Church as differing from a world,” is quite as independent and irrespective of outward Church arrangements, as is the most spiritual notion ever imagined concerning the Church invisible. The real question, in one word, amounts to this — Is the difference between “ a Church and a world,” a difference of persons, or of principles merely ? Of course there is

a radical distinction of principles; but is there a distinction of persons also? Does the Church which the Holy Spirit, by his personal dealing with men, is forming, consist at this moment of certain persons, distinguished and separated from certain other persons, living on the earth? It is not supposed that we can make the distinction and separation, although we may be able to discern in godly men of every name the marks of the kingdom. Neither is it supposed that the Church consists of the same persons next moment that it consists of now. The Lord,—the Holy Spirit,—is ever adding to the number. But the point is this:—Are there persons known to God, however indiscernible by man, who do now really make up a Church differing from a world,—a Church which God can distinguish although man cannot? Are they separated from others,—are they changed from what they themselves naturally are,—by a personal dealing of the Holy Spirit with each one of them individually, creating him anew in Christ?

The author makes a somewhat noticeable distinction between a nominal and a real inheritance. He wishes to vindicate the maxim, ‘*nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*,’ from the abuse of it in the hands of Romanists and some Protestants, and to restore it to what he considers its true and original meaning. Towards the close of his explanation, he speaks of those who are not satisfied with our common notions and practices in Church matters, who “long for a wider fellowship, a Father’s

house, a Spirit who can make them brothers with all men, Greeks, Romanists, Protestants." And he adds that we do not meet their longing "if we cannot tell them that they are inheritors of Christ's kingdom in earth and heaven, and that the Spirit of the Father and Son is with them—in order that the inheritance may not be a nominal, but a real one." Are there, then, those to whom the inheritance as yet is nominal merely? It would seem so; and, indeed, it must be so. What, then, is our gospel-message to them to be? You are sons and heirs; but you do not know this; you do not believe it; you do not feel it to be a reality. If you did, you would be convinced that you are not "meant to live in a world where every one is divided from his neighbour,—in which there is no uniting, fusing principle,—in which each lives to himself, and for himself." We "bid you fly from that chaos; for . . . 'There is a universe for you! Nay, more, there is a Father's house open to you.'"—God "is the Head of a family; his Son has proved you to be members of it. His Spirit is given that you may know him as he is, not as your hard material hearts represent him to you. Come into this ark. Take up your place in this family. Here is deliverance and health. *Nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*. No comfort, no health, no peace, while you count yourselves exiles from God, strangers to your brethren." (Pp. 404-406.) Such is the author's call to men.

Now, wherein does this differ from the ordinary evan-

gelical method of inviting sinners to come to Christ? Is this really, after all, a wider, more comprehensive, more universal gospel? We, too, go to all men indiscriminately, and say—There is a Father's house,—a Father's heart,—open to you. His Son has proved this by coming, at his Father's desire, to remove the obstacle which your guilt and depravity have interposed between you and the righteous Lord of all. His Spirit also is given that you may know him as he is; that your heart of stone may become a heart of flesh; that instead of doubt, dislike, distrust, there may be a new-born feeling of confidence. You may see him now waiting to receive you with open arms the instant you return to him. You feel him now, persuading—moving you to return. Lo! he welcomes you without one word or look of upbraiding as his sons again. Come into this ark. Take your place in this family. Here is deliverance and health. Come, and be 'no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God.'

This is our '*nulla salus extra Ecclesiam*;' this is our gospel. Does any one still ask, 'Where is the difference? The author tells men that whatever they may be in point of right, they are all wrong in point of fact, until the Spirit shews them and makes them feel that they are members of the family of God, that he is their Father, that the inheritance is not nominal but real. Do not you tell them the very same thing?' So far, the author



and we are in the same position. He, as well as we, is forced after all to admit that men must undergo a change of some sort when they are, one by one, added to the number of those who to any good or saving purpose are *intra Ecclesiam*, within the Church. But here is the point. He tells men that they already are, and have all along been, in the family of God, sons and heirs; that his Son has proved this: that his Spirit is given to make them know and feel it. We say to them, No: up to this moment you are exiles from God, whether you count yourselves to be so or not; nay more, you are criminals, under a suspended, a respited, sentence of condemnation; you are enemies also, alienated from him, 'hateful and hating one another.' That, up to this present time, is your real state and character. But there is no reason whatever why it should continue to be so for one instant longer. There is provision in the Son for the removal of your guilt, and your sense of it. There is power in the Spirit to create in you a clean heart, to renovate your nature. And both are near; both are freely given. Resist not the Spirit. Refuse not the Son. Believe, and enter into peace; receive the Spirit of adoption, and say, Abba, Father.

Now, Scripture apart, which of these two ways of meeting the case is really adapted to what a thoughtful man must feel when he is led to reflect on his relation to God, and the state of his heart towards God? Will it be easy to satisfy him that he already is a child of



God, a member of his family, and that all he has to do is to realize this? Will not his conscience revolt against any such belief, as not consistent with his consciousness? Is it not better news to tell him of Christ as bringing him into a new relation to God, and of the Holy Spirit as making him a new man?

And, in fine, is it not thus the Spirit is really honoured,—his personality asserted,—his work magnified? It will be found very difficult indeed to hold fast the conviction that the Holy Spirit is a real, living Person,—and has a real work to do, in and upon living men, as persons,—if the formation of a Church out of a world,—or the transformation of a world into a Church,—be really little more than this; that men *en masse*, as it were,—in all circumstances, societies and relations,—recognise what they already are. It is, after all, in the doctrine that men are individually converted, and become members, *de novo*, of a body separate from the world, and not as yet definitely visible in the world, that the personality and work of the Holy Spirit are most clearly and conspicuously seen. There may be occasion to refer to this observation again before the subject of the Trinity is disposed of. Meanwhile let the two questions be kept distinct. Is the world to become the Church? That is possible, probable, certain; different men will reply, more or less confidently. But what is the Church now, in its present relation to the world? That is the real point at issue.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

#### ESSAY XVI.—ON THE TRINITY IN UNITY.

THE recapitulation at the beginning of this Essay, (pp. 410–415), may be passed over in the mean time; and the opening Essay on Charity may be allowed to find its supplement, or complement, through the intermediate topics, in this Essay on the Trinity. Certainly love on earth is identical with love in heaven.

This great doctrine, the author thinks,—the Trinity in Unity,—is not to be treated as “a mere dogma,” supported only “by tradition, or inferences from texts of Scripture,” or any “great philosophical tenet, deducible from reason, or latent in nature.” Tradition, Scripture, philosophy, may do much. But it must be because they guide us “to a Name which is implied in our thoughts, acts, words, in our fellowship with each other;”—a Name which proves the charity of God to be at once the model, and the ultimate fulfilment and joy, of the charity of man. Upon this footing, the author undertakes to “shew how each portion of that Name into which we are baptized, answers to some ap-

prehension and anticipation of human beings." (Pp. 416, 417.) This is the main object of the present Essay ; and on this, attention may in the first instance be concentrated. The other views suggested by the author are incidental and subordinate to this one. He is to find in the baptismal name the realization of the higher instincts of man.

It may be necessary here to adopt somewhat more of formal subdivision than he himself might choose.

I. The Father. The question of the government of the universe is raised by this mention of the first Person.

1. There are three ideas pervading the Greek mythology ; *first*, that of Fate, Necessity, Fixed Law, Destiny ; *secondly*, that of Will, Sovereignty ; and *thirdly*, that of a Father. There was often relief from the oppressive sense of being ruled by caprice or tyranny in the recognition of the second of these, mere sovereignty, as subject to the first,—to fixed fate. But again, "the sense of a hard, dry, iron rule,—an irresistible necessity,—became more intolerable than the government of the most uncertain king." "Especially these words, 'Father of gods and men' touched chords which at once responded to them." A Father, having a will, is better than a fate. (P. 418.)

2. The same three ideas are to be traced in Scripture. *First*, there is "fixed law, grounded on the name of the I AM." *Secondly*, "Christ on the mountain announced the Will of which that law was the expression."

Thirdly, "He said it was the Will of a Father." "Beneath the name of the God of Abraham, this was concealed. The sound of it was from time to time caught, not only by holy men in their closets, but by the ordinary worshipper. The Greek heard the echo of it from his Thessalian hill. Christ uttered it." (P. 419.)

3. This last message unites the other two conceptions. "The fixed and the absolute for which man craves," "is bound inseparably with a name which speaks of relation, which tells him what he was sure must be; that his own will has an author; that he is not merely a creature of the highest God, but a child." (P. 419.)

4. "All is peace if we accept this as a revelation,—as a Gospel of God;" not to be "*measured*," though it must be "*tested*" by "the conceptions and anticipations of our own mind." Thus to measure it;—that is, probably, to inquire in what sense, on what ground, to what effect, man, the creature, is *ipso facto* a child of the highest God;—to ask what conscience has to say upon the subject;—to raise any question whether the relation is nominal or real—or if real, whether it subsists entire or needs to be restored;—thus to measure it, is to revive the war. Again we oscillate between "iron necessity" and some "present helper, some one to whom we may address cries and litanies." We may call him Father; but the name will be associated with the caprices of nature or of man; his will is changeable as the clouds, or irregular as our own. It is "the old name, the *given*

name, which we need, and are trying to spell out.” “The child must confess its Father, and confess itself to him. Then it knows whose will rules it, and with what will it has been striving.” (P. 420.) True, the child must know his Father. But in order to that, he may require to know *first*,—if not whether his being the creature of the highest God constitutes him of necessity a child, at least whether the Father with whose will he has been striving is willing to be to him a Father still, really and not nominally,—if that is the Father’s will?—and *secondly*, how is it the Father’s will that the relation which he feels has been interrupted, should be readjusted and revived?

5. These are relevant questions. They tend to prove that it is not possible to find the ground of the name given to the First Person in the Trinity in the actual relation of man, the creature, to God the Creator; that neither consciousness nor conscience will sustain any such ground. It may be quite true that the “superstitions of the Christian world” are connected with two notions; that “the notion of a sovereign necessity has taken the place of a will of absolute truth and goodness;” that “the notion of a capricious Power to be made placable by some agency of ours has superseded the belief in a Father, whose will Christ came on earth to manifest and to fulfil.” And the author may discover “in our baptismal faith” a refuge from both; provided only we do not “substitute for a belief in a Father, a belief in a notion

of ours about a Father." (P. 421.) But my moral sense, my common sense, insists upon some explanation here. I am baptized into the name of a Father. Be it so. Still I may ask,—I must ask,—does this mean that the highest God is my Father necessarily, in respect of his being my Maker? Is that the revelation into the belief of which I am baptized? It will go but a little way to satisfy my guilty and inquiring spirit. For I ask again,—has this Father anything to do with that necessary, immutable, eternal law of holiness, truth, and love,—that authoritative moral law,—the obligations and the sanctions of which I inwardly know and deeply feel to be as fixed as the nature of God? Is he the very God whose essential moral being this law represents,—whose throne it upholds? Gladly do I welcome the thought that this Father, in whom I see the Law-giver and Judge, is not fate, and is not bound by fate, but is free, and has a will to exercise;—a will infinitely holy, wise, and good. But I wait to learn what exercise of that will it is which can meet the case of a criminal whom the law condemns. And until I am satisfied that he can, that he will, that he does make me his child,—upon another footing than that of any original relation subsisting between us by creation,—you may tell me of my "baptismal faith," but for anything you tell me, I cannot be convinced that I am not baptized into the belief of an empty title.

Of course it may be said that I am doing the very



thing the author deprecates, "substituting for a belief in a Father, a belief in a notion of mine about a Father." But how can I believe in a Father, without having notions about him? And the notions are not mine; they are the very notions which the author himself suggests. One thing at any rate seems clear, that to rest the name Father upon the natural, primary, and universal relation of God to his creatures, is to build upon a somewhat uncertain and unsatisfactory foundation.

II. The Son. The question here is that of Mediation.

1. The idea of mere Fate or Necessity being ruler, precludes mediation; that of mere Will or capricious Power, admits of mediators without number; "helpers of the creatures against their Creator;" naturally related, perhaps, to him; or having an influence or right over him obtained by some merit; but still always "the benignant patrons of those whom he is disposed, for some reason, to injure." (P. 421.)

2. "When the word 'Father' has taken any strong hold of a man anywhere, when it has displaced the notion of a mere sovereign, there will be a counteraction to this feeling. Those who plead for man with Him, must be felt *in some sense* to express his mind; they will be acknowledged as his sons." Thus that low and wicked theory of mediation is exploded. It is not necessary to inquire whether there are not other ways of meeting it, and ways more obvious than this, while they are as much in accordance with Scripture and right reason.



But there is a point to be specially noted. The author seems to make the sense of our natural and original relation to God the ground of our belief in the relation between the First Person in the Trinity and the Second.

3. It must be further remembered, as counteracting the feeling in question, that "the Will of this Father is as steadfast as any fate can be ;" steadfast, because it is righteous and good, and "can only seek to do good." This "Will must have a Word." "It must speak." "A Will that is, and lives, must utter itself by a living Word." Hence the two interchangeable names in John's "divine theology," a Word ; a Son. (P. 422.)

4. Much harm arises from using either "exclusively." To dwell on the former, is to make everything impersonal, and to become at last ourselves impersonal ; it tends to pantheism. To isolate the second, is to incur the danger of merging "the Son of God in the Son of man," and falling into "idolatry." The author speaks of "a popular,"—as distinguished from an "abstract,"—"way of thinking of the Son of God ;" and of "the unspeakable dangers into which those fall who think of the Son only as their Saviour, and not as the brightness of his Father's glory." We do well to "cleave to the blessed name of Son," and never to "forget that only a Person can express the will of the Absolute Being ; that only in a Person can he see his own image." But "if we do not recur to that other name," "we shall refer his relationship to ours, not ours to his." The more

“abstract” name, then,—the Word,—qualifies the more personal and popular, and as it were human name,—the Son. It brings out an element in his relationship to the Father,—his being the expression of the Father’s will, the image of the Father’s glory,—which obliges us to refer our relationship to his, not his to ours. That is an advance upon the previous statement, which appears to find the origin of our idea of Christ’s filial relation to the Father in the sense or consciousness of our own. But the one is not inconsistent with the other. Our conviction that the Mediator must be a Son is based upon God being our Father. He must also, we feel, “*in some sense* express the mind” of his Father. He is the utterance of his will. He is his word. His relationship, therefore, to the Father transcends ours, and ours is to be referred to his. His is the index or exponent of ours. (P. 422.)

5. The author finds the remedy for these evil tendencies in “the name of the Son into which we are baptized;” our “being adopted into him as members of his body.” “This faith is not notional, but practical; not for this and that man, but for mankind.” “He is revealed to us as the ground of our intellects,—the creative Word of God, from whom they derive their light: as the centre of our fellowship, the only-begotten Son of God, in whom we are made sons of God.” All “weary effort is over.” We are “at home” and “have peace.” (Pp. 423, 424.) If the author meant that in the Son of

God—in Christ—we are made the sons of God *de novo*, anew and afresh, by regeneration and adoption; if he meant that we are made,—that men universally need to be made,—the sons of God, for the first time, or for the first time since the Fall, by a new creative act or work on the part of God; his statement might be admitted: thus only is weary effort ended; thus only are home and peace reached. But it is the mere relation of the Son to the Father, and not any office executed by the Son for the Father, that the author has in view. And he finds the ground or reason of the name given to the Second Person in the Trinity, *first*, in the relation in which man naturally and necessarily stands to God, and *secondly*, in the actual relation of the Redeemer to man,—to every man,—as the ground of his intellect and the centre of his fellowship,—the light of the one and the life of the other. I am a son, and must have a Son to be my helper.

III. The Spirit. Inspiration, or the living and personal energy of divine power, is here in question.

1. "A mere Fate or Necessity of course communicates no life or energy to those who are the subjects of it." "A Ruler or Lord of Nature may impart powers or energies to particular men;"—to favourites;—"dear to the Gods;"—whose "high gifts" will "indicate an Inspirer, descended from the highest God." The "name of Father greatly modified the previous belief." It excluded "*mere* choice or favouritism." The "gift of inspiration" "was a kind of inheritance." (P. 424.)

2. "A Will, driving out a Fate, must seek to make other wills like itself." Holiness is and "must be the innermost nature of God;" and of this, "it is the will of God to make man partaker." He asks how? "Can he become God?" No; "his desire is to sink rather than to rise." Again "the inmost life of God should be communicated." "A Being of perfect love cannot be so wrapt up in himself" as "to dwell in the contemplation of his own excellence and perfection." A Being of perfect holiness cannot be "satisfied with any lower excellence or perfection." Here are two "difficulties," the one "human," the other "divine." "The belief of a Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son meets both." (P. 426.) Is it asked, how? The answer begins with the following sentence:

3. "To think of the Father resting in the Son, in the deepest sense knowing the Son, and of the Son knowing the Father, we must think of a uniting Spirit." Not a syllable of explanation or proof is added. And yet the proposition is certainly not self-evident. Nor is there a hint of anything like it in the passage of Scripture which seems to have suggested the language. But the author immediately adds: "And if there is such a Spirit, it must be capable of being imparted; that must be the way in which holiness is imparted." The Spirit, uniting the Father as knowing the Son and the Son as knowing the Father, is imparted to men. "This gift is through the Son." It "must bring all to a level.

In so far as they confess it to be the Spirit of a Father, they must confess that it is meant to make them sons of God; in so far as they confess that it is the Spirit of Christ, they confess that it is meant to make them brothers." More and more they "own it as distinct from them,"—recognise in it the "Comforter,"—and feel "that there is a divine Person with them to whom they owe reverence and worship." (P. 427.)

Is there anything more in all this than our being enabled to recognise an existing relation between the Father and us, and to identify it with the relation between the Father and Son? Is not this what is really meant by the holiness,—the innermost nature of God,—being communicated to us? But, minute criticism apart, let an observation or two on this doctrine of the Trinity be hazarded.

In the first place, What is there in it beyond the personification of relations?—or rather a threefold personification of one relation? There is the Father, sustaining to us the relation, not of fate or of will,—not of mere law or arbitrary sovereignty,—but of necessary paternity. A will he has; a will he exercises. But it is not as 'of his own will begetting us with the word of truth,' that he is to us a Father. He is so, originally and naturally, independently of any act of grace, or any work of power, since the Fall, or since our birth. Then there is the Son—the Mediator; who must be a Son if he is to represent us and plead for us with the Father; and who

also must express, or must himself be, the utterance of the Father's will. In him the relation of paternity is authenticated and revealed. Lastly, there is the Spirit, uniting the Father as knowing the Son, and the Son as knowing the Father; and communicating to us this union. By him the relation of paternity is made real and palpable to our inmost experience.

Again, secondly, without reviving the old subtleties of Oriental and Grecian refinement, or plunging into the abyss of speculation about the manner of the Divine subsistence,—it is impossible to examine the portion of this Essay thus far brought under review, in the light of the previous Essays and the system which they develope, and not to feel that the question is unavoidably raised,—Is the distinction of the persons in the Trinity real, and not merely nominal? We have, *first*, the relation of fatherhood; *secondly*, that relation attested and made apparent; *thirdly*, that relation energized and vitalized. God is our Father. He proves by a Witness in us and to us,—ultimately by that Witness becoming one of us,—that we are his sons. He exerts a powerful influence upon us, that we may own and feel this, and act accordingly. A father has to deal with children who have become suspicious of him and estranged from him. He is their father still. He is still always among them; prompting filial thoughts and feelings; keeping alive in them the ineradicable sense of sonship; and perhaps singling out one whom he succeeds in making pre-



eminently a model of this sonship to the rest. At the same time he brings his mind more directly into contact with theirs; throwing himself, as their father by right, and as by sympathy one of themselves, into their hearts; and exerting all the power and influence he has, to get them to call him father. This is a human analogy; and therefore imperfect. Let the father be the omnipotent and omnipresent God; and let the problem suggested be worked out under that condition.

The design of this remark is not by any means to insinuate a charge of Sabellianism, or of any unsound opinion on the subject of the Trinity;—beyond vagueness and indistinctness. The object of it is to prepare the way for one other observation.

In the third place, therefore, it deserves to be considered whether a real distinction of the Persons in the Trinity can long be maintained as a theological belief, if there be not a distinction of offices. If there be ascribed to the Son an actual work of redemption—the work of meeting the demands of law and justice as the Substitute of responsible and guilty men; if there be ascribed to the Spirit an actual work of regeneration and sanctification—the work of renovating their moral nature and creating them anew to holiness; and if the Father be recognised as, with the Son and the Spirit, originating this dispensation of love—and as, through the Son and by the Spirit, reconciling the world unto himself; there is such a separation of offices in this



great economy as must for ever prevent the confounding of the Persons. On any theory which, however it may accommodate itself to orthodox and evangelical phraseology, does in fact reduce the whole process of man's redemption, regeneration and salvation, to one of discovery, illumination, revelation, inspiration,—or whatever other word may be used to denote a man's being brought to see and apprehend what he already is,—it seems extremely difficult to guard against this doctrine of the Three Persons in the Trinity becoming, after all, nominal rather than real. If the root and ground of the entire procedure for man's recovery, in so far as he needs recovery, is a relation subsisting naturally and necessarily between him and the Being who, as his Maker, is his Father; and if all that is to be done is to have that relation illustrated and realized;—there is scarcely room for this being distributed among the several Divine Persons in any manner that shall not very soon become shadowy. God, standing by men always, and being in them, encourages them, in defiance of the evil spirit, to assert their sonship, and to expect that in due time a perfect example of it shall be exhibited triumphantly in one of themselves. The same God also, by a powerful influence always and everywhere in operation to illuminate and inspire, brings them to see clearly their relation of sonship to him, to recognise it, and to live in light and liberty as sons. It is not meant that this is the author's view of the Trinity; very far from

it. He evidently finds intense satisfaction to his own mind and heart in owning the distinct Personality in the fullest and truest sense, and adoring Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The design of the present observation is to suggest inquiry whether it is probable, or even possible, that other men,—that the Church at large,—can long hold fast the doctrine of Three Persons in one God, as an important and practical doctrine,—if that which is to be effected by them is so simple and incapable of division as the author makes it. A careful study of Scripture, and of the way in which the doctrine is unfolded in Scripture, might throw great light on the subject. There is scarcely any express assertion of it in the Bible,—if, indeed, there be any at all. It is brought out in action, not in definition. Each Divine Person appears executing a distinct function. And it will be found upon examination, first, that these functions are more distinct than they can be according to the author's representation of the plan and work of salvation; and secondly, that if these functions are set aside, Scripture gives little warrant for anything more than a nominal Trinity.

It is not necessary to dwell much on the remainder of this Essay. After shewing how the belief of the Trinity really delivers man from manifold idolatries and imparts a profound sense of Unity;—especially by shewing us what we are, making us feel that we are one, and must have a Father who shall be to us really a Father, a Son “filled with all human sympathies,” a “Divine

Spirit in the contrite heart and pure ; ” — the author proceeds to deal with the doctrine of Eternal Life. He censures Mr Manning, whom he introduces as pointing us to Rome as our infallible guide, for making our Lord “ say, ‘ Men obtain eternal life by knowing God ; ’ ” whereas, of course, what our Lord did say was, “ ‘ *This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* ’ ” This censure he smoothes away in a note by hinting that the Archdeacon may probably have learned thus to quote Scripture while he was among “ English divines ; ” a hint which might almost provoke the retort that he might very easily learn it if he was much in the author’s company ; for certainly his own quotations are sometimes odd enough. But at any rate the author is right here. It is a great truth which our Lord asserts. The knowledge of which he speaks “ does not procure the life, but the knowledge constitutes the life.” (Pp. 427-429.)

But “ eternal life ” is the phrase. And here the author takes pains to shew that “ eternity is not a lengthening out or continuation of time ; that they are generically different.” He appeals to experience, which proves the “ utter vanity and emptiness of chronology as a measure of suffering, of thought, of hope, of love. All these belong to another state of things,” of which also “ Scripture is speaking ; ” “ educating us into the apprehension of it.” Surely the author cannot mean that the life which the knowledge of God and of Christ con-

stitutes, is a life incompatible with a consciousness of the succession and lapse of time ; that the words ' eternal life ' have no reference to continuance or duration. That, however, is not now the question. If he merely means that the life essentially consists, not in those lower physical sensations which are most sensitive to " the law of change and succession," but in acts and exercises of mind in which that law is often almost entirely disregarded, and " a long life, the poet says, may be curdled into an hour," he might have said so more plainly. He is right, however, in protesting against the error " of picturing to ourselves some future bliss, calling that eternal life, and determining the worth of it by a number of years, or centuries, or millenniums." Eternal life, however long it may last, begins now, in our " knowing God as we only can know any person, by sympathy, fellowship, love." And he is right in connecting this loving knowledge,—this all-embracing charity which the Spirit calls forth in us,—with the " Perfect Charity," which is God ; for we have fellowship " with the Father and the Son who dwell in the Unity of one blessed and eternal Spirit." (Pp. 430-432.) These are holy thoughts, although this last expression repeats the not very intelligible idea already noticed, as to the manner of the subsistence of the Three Persons in the Godhead. If the author had gone a little further into the prayer, one of whose opening sentences he quotes as the ground of his remarks, he must have been led to connect

the knowledge of God which is life eternal, more distinctly than he has done,—on the one hand, with the work which Christ says was given him to do, which he says he has finished,—as well as, on the other hand, with the work which he asks the Father to do after he himself has gone from this world, the work with a view to which he announces the mission of the Comforter.

In his closing appeal to the younger Unitarians the author refers to “the philosophical Trinity,” and reminds them that while their fathers thought that “every rational man must reject the idea of a Trinity,” yet, on the contrary, “some of the deepest minds in the world have felt that the acknowledgment of a Trinity was necessary to their reason.” And supposing them willing to welcome the doctrine rather as “a discovery of philosophy,” than as “a religious tradition,” he asks what this means? Is it “the discovery of a verbal formula,”—or of “a *truth*?” Is it a law of thought, as gravitation is a law of matter? Or is it “truth as the equivalent of substance or being?” Then, in that case, the Trinity has substance; and “in Christ it is revealed substantially.” It has a real and actual being. It is more than a doctrine. It is the existence or subsistence of Persons; or it is nothing. “The modern Unitarian philosopher,” if he “pursue his task steadily,” will go beyond any “verbal formula,” any law of thought, any necessity of reason. He will find the “reality” to which “the perception or intuition corresponds,”—the

“substance” of which “he sees the shadow,” in the “real Persons,” and the “real Unity,” of a substantial Trinity revealed in Christ. (Pp. 430–434.)

Especially will he do so through prayer and in prayer. The horns of the dilemma;—‘Is God’s will good?—why wish to move it? Is it not good?—why try, seeing he is omnipotent?’—those “logical icebergs,” which “move away” when men are in earnest,—and which, when men are at leisure, scarcely yield to any theory of reflex influence,—will melt at the touch of this divine mystery. Even the strictest Necessitarians of the school of Priestley contrive to extricate “the idea of him they call Father;” to endow him with “a Will,” and to believe that “this Will may govern *them*, in some different way from that in which he governs the trees, and flowers, and streams.” “*Intercourse*,” then, is possible; however “the name may savour of fanaticism.” But “the doubt occurs,”—“Am I sure that I have any relation to this mysterious Will?” The “doctrine of a Mediator, one with the Father, one with you, meets it,” as nothing else can. Then, again, whatever “sense of wrong, of remorse, of repentance, mingled with your sorrow,” “drove you *to* God,” while at the same time “keeping you *from* God,”—is “overcome” when you “accept Christ’s sacrifice as the assurance of his reconciliation with you,” and think of his “presenting it not for you, but for the whole family; it is binding you to men as well as to God.” “For



you must know, then, that you are not striving to get something which God is unwilling to give; that you are crying out for the victory of his Will over your own, and over all others." Finally, the belief "that there is a Spirit who is urging us to those higher impulses to which we are so indisposed, who is lifting us above ourselves, who is drawing us to the Father of our spirits," may not only "explain to you that 'reaction on your own minds' which you have talked of;"—but "satisfy your feelings and your sincerity," when "you are conscious of utter powerlessness,—of a mind anything but disposed to good," "to love or aid your fellow-men," as God does. (Pp. 435–438.)

Now, these two,—eternal life as the gift of God, and prayer as the expression or breath of it,—are undoubtedly the chief practical applications or bearings of the doctrine of the Trinity, in whatever way it may be, as a mere doctrine, expressed or explained. It is a worthless scholastic riddle, if it has not in it the element of both life and prayer. The life must have some other property besides endless duration,—though it may and must have that: it must be life now and evermore in the favour and lovingkindness and fellowship of God. And the prayer must be no mere trick which a man may play upon himself when he thinks he is pleading with God and is all the while only trying to work upon his own mind; it must be "intercourse;"—it must be asking in order to receive. But in this connexion also,

the question again arises ;—Can the distinction of the Persons be maintained in the practical use of the doctrine, any more than in the statement of the doctrine itself, without such a distinction of offices as the author is by no means prepared to admit? For really, after all, what more is needed to make me know God and converse with God than this ;—that he should certify to me in some decided way his being of very necessity my Father ; that he should also assure me, in some emphatic way, of his sympathy with me as his child, in my aspirations towards him and my struggle with the evil spirit ; that he should moreover insure to me his influence and power, irresistible as these are in the world within and in the world without, in order that I may always realize and assert my relation to him as my Father. Give me that Trinity ;—God confirming to me his Fatherhood ; entering kindly into my childhood ; helping me to act the son ;—and for anything I can see, according to the author's view of what my actual relation to God is and what my case needs, I have the knowledge of God which is life and which inspires prayer. No doubt, that would not satisfy the author ; he can neither live nor pray without the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The danger, however, is not on that account the less,—that it may come to satisfy some of those who, without the author's heart, submit themselves to the guidance of his mind. But let me own my need of distinct offices of redeem-

ing love being performed towards me, such as only Divine Persons can perform. I am no child, but a rebel and a criminal, only the more guilty because I cannot but acknowledge the right of my Maker to have had, and to have me, for his dutiful child. I feel that if I am to be really his child, my guilt—my criminality—must be dealt with and disposed of; and how that may be without my perishing, I cannot think; at least if God is just and holy; and if he is not, it is a small matter to be his child. I feel also that I have not the heart of a child towards him; that even were he to ask me to be on the terms of affectionate intercourse with him on which a child ought to be with his father, I could not, and would not, consent to be so; and how I am ever to have a really better heart I know not. To me, feeling thus, an entirely new discovery is made from heaven, directly by God himself to me; a discovery which never could have entered into my mind; entirely apart from all experience of mine, with all which, however, it marvellously fits in. It is this;—that there are Divine Persons to discharge the offices my miserable case demands; that there is a Son, who taking my place as a criminal, fulfilling the righteousness and enduring the condemnation of the law in my stead, invests me with a right to take his place, along with himself, in the home and heart of his Father, where he is ever representing me; that there is a Spirit who can reach and touch the spring of thought and action in me, and reno-

vate my will ; that the Father—sending, in infinite love, the loving Son, the loving Spirit—receives me, acquits me, adopts me, loves me as his son, and makes me heir of all things. To know this ; practically, personally, experimentally to know this ;—is to have life in the highest sense, and to have it for evermore. To act upon that knowledge is to pray ; it is to have access through the Son, by the Spirit, to the Father. Nor in all this am I in the least selfish or exclusive. The two conditions of my new position are, first, that I am willing to take it, to assume and realize it, not as one separated from my fellows, but as one of them,—a sinner,—the chief of sinners ;—and secondly, that I am willing to be one with Him who would ‘have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.’

## CHAPTER X.

### THE FUTURE STATE.

#### CONCLUDING ESSAY—ETERNAL LIFE AND ETERNAL DEATH.

THE author might here stop, but for a doctrine which, it may be alleged, “contradicts the principle of his whole book;” the doctrine of “everlasting punishment after death.” (P. 442.) His manner of approaching this awful subject must be noticed. An objector is as usual brought forward to be the interlocutor in an imaginary conversation. In the present instance, this fictitious personage is to be considered as stating the author’s own sentiments, with the breadth, point, and freedom, which that literary device allows. And what he says may suggest one or two preliminary remarks.

1. It is plain that the author is not in a position to discuss the question upon its own proper merits. Apart from the feeling of extreme acerbity which pervades his whole discussion of it,—there is this more serious obstacle to his calmly considering it; his previous system is at stake. Surely, if there be a question the consideration

of which demands freedom both from passion and from prejudice, it is this. The author knew all along that every one of the views put forth by him raised a previous inquiry; an inquiry, as shall be presently shewn, which touches not merely the duration, but the nature and reality of future punishment. He ought to have anticipated the inquiry. He ought to have inquired long ago whether there is not a principle of moral government, revealed by God and authenticated by conscience, which requires a very different remedial process from that which he has been describing. It is his own arrangement that has brought "his whole book" to the test which he acknowledges it must now, at the last stage, undergo.

2. Once for all, let a protest be entered, not resentfully, in sorrow not in anger, against the language which, whether in the person of an objector or in his own person, the author thinks himself entitled to employ when he speaks of the doctrine he is opposing and of the men who hold it. What right has he to represent them as believing that "an immense—an incalculable—majority of all that have been born into the world must be hopelessly doomed?" or to say that "their object is to point out how a few, a very few, may be saved from the sentence,"—how "certain men may have the comfort of feeling that they are not sharers in the condition to which God has consigned our race?" (P. 443.) He knows that they rejoice in what John saw when he 'beheld, and, lo! a mighty multitude which no man



could number, of all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, stood before the throne;—that they dwell with deep delight on the Saviour's love of little children;—that they urge the world's doom as the strongest motive for preaching the gospel of free grace to all;—that if ever they are disposed to ask, 'Are there few that be saved?' they receive with fear and trembling the Lord's reply,—'Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able.' Again, does he do well when he allows, without reply, his Unitarian objectors to denounce as worse than purgatory, or the *Inferno* of Dante, "the decree which goes forth from so many pulpits in our land: '*Understand, sinners, whatever be your offences, whatever your temptations, the same irremediable anguish is prepared for you all?*'" Is this fair toward men who are always reminding those who have the highest privileges, that 'the servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes, and he who knew not and committed things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes?' Or does it serve any good purpose to hold them up as teaching that men are to be condemned for "not believing things they never learnt, or for not abstaining from acts they have been all their lives taught to commit?" (P. 444.) Certainly the condemnation, whatever it is, will be for that for which their own hearts condemn them. Worse misrepresentations occur afterwards, which, under the cover of these

instances and this general protest, may for the most part be left unnoticed.

3. But "the Evangelical Alliance" makes the tenet in question "one of its nine articles of faith." Theologians are becoming "*more* outrageous, *more* contemptuous to human sympathies and conscience, than they used to be when all men bowed the neck to their yoke." The reason why the members of the Alliance added the doctrine of eternal punishment to those previously mentioned in their form of adherence, was very much the same as the reason why the author is concerned to get rid of it. Confessedly, "all their doctrines have this centre." Their views of "Atonement, Justification, Regeneration," proceed upon the principle of the Divine government which this doctrine represents. And the author's views also of these great subjects proceed upon a denial of that principle; a denial of it inconsistent not merely with the idea of retribution being endless, but with the idea of there being such a thing as retribution at all, in the common and fair sense of that term. (Pp. 443-445.)

The author considers the doctrine in the light, I. of the New Testament, II. of ecclesiastical history, and III. of modern evangelical opinion.

I. He admits, with Dr Owen, "that there is very much more about eternity and eternal punishments in the gospel than in the law." And he holds that this is a "point to be well recollected and carefully reflected upon, in connexion with the opinion which all

in some way or other entertain, in some language or other express, that the New Testament is more completely a revelation of the love of God than the Old is. The two assertions must be reconciled." He further "concedes that we cannot honestly get rid of this contradiction by attaching two different meanings to the word *αἰώνιος* in different applications." He adds to this concession, as if it were identical with it, the remark, "The subjects which it qualifies cannot affect the sense we put upon it;" and it soon appears that he does so for a purpose. He goes on to remark that in the New Testament God is "discovering himself," not in "his relations to the visible economy of the world," as he chiefly did in the Old; but "in his own inward nature, and is declaring himself as he is in him who is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person." When "the word *eternal* is used, then, in the New Testament, it ought first, by all rules of reason, to be considered in reference to God. Its use when it is applied to him, must determine all its other uses." "How can we carry out this rule?" he asks with an air of defiance; "'Eternal' means, in reference to God, 'without beginning or end;'" can we "affix that meaning to eternal, when we are speaking of man's bliss or misery? Is that without beginning as well as without end?" "Oh, no! you must leave out the beginning. That of course has nothing to do with this case,"—is the assumed reply. "Who told you so? How dare you play

thus fast and loose with God's word?" And so on he scolds: the zeal of God's word having eaten him up.

Now this is a smart hit, but is really little more. It is not by any means a self-evident canon of criticism, or one generally admitted, that "the subjects which the adjective qualifies cannot affect the sense we put upon it." The meaning of any word may be modified by the connexion in which it stands. What Unitarians were blamed for was, their ascribing different meanings to the same word in precisely the same connexion; as when they made 'eternal' mean different things when applied to 'life' and 'punishment' in the same sentence. It might be observed also, that this word 'eternal' is very rarely in Scripture applied to God; perhaps not oftener than twice; and that it is quite as much in accordance with every sound principle of interpretation to begin by taking the word in its more common applications, and then, from what may seem to be its fair meaning in these cases, to rise according to the usage of language to any wider significancy which it must have when applied to the being and perfections of God. But it is not on verbal criticism that the author relies. He "quite agrees that such a meaning" as 'without beginning and end' "might have seemed very natural to an ordinary Greek. The word might have been used in that sense by a classical author, or in colloquial language, without the least impropriety." And it may be presumed that neither the ordinary Greek nor the classical author would

have had much difficulty about "leaving out the beginning," when he used the word with reference to man and things human. It seems, however, that the spirit of the New Testament precludes us from understanding 'eternal' or 'eternity' as having anything to do with duration. This was "just *the* lesson which God had been teaching men by the revelation of himself;"—the lesson, namely, "that mere negatives are utterly unfit to express his being, his substance." True. But does it follow that negatives cannot be predicated of God at all? It would seem so, according to the author. He traces the education by which the Jew was taught this lesson, and made to "perceive that God's righteousness, his truth, his love, were the substantial and eternal things, by seeking which he was delivered from the worship of gods of time and sense, as well as from the more miserable philosophical abstraction of a God who is merely a negative of time; *without* beginning and *without* end." And then he quotes the language of John, "*The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and we declare unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and which has been manifested to us.*" It is "a specimen of his usual language;" and as the author "is bold to say, it interprets all the language of the New Testament." Be it so. Certainly the beloved apostle delights to speak of eternal life, to connect it with his master and Lord, to identify it with the knowledge of him. Jesus himself does so in "his last prayer, if he who reports that prayer did

not misinterpret his meaning,"—a strange qualification, a hint, probably, that the only way to get rid of the author's own interpretation of Christ's meaning, is to suppose that the evangelist misinterpreted it. Happily there is no occasion to call in question either the reporter's accuracy or the essayist's judgment,—whatever may be thought of the taste and modesty of his innuendo. It may be admitted that "the eternal life is the righteousness and truth and love of God which are manifested in Christ Jesus; manifested to men, that they may be partakers of them, that they may have fellowship with the Father and with the Son." Still some questions will remain. May not the term 'life' sufficiently denote all this? 'The life was manifested;'—He who is the life,—the Word of life. May there not be some additional idea implied in the adjunct 'eternal?' Granting it to be the idea of what is most absolute and positive, is it self-evident that it may not also be inclusive of the idea of unlimited duration? (Pp. 446-450.)

The truth is, the author seems almost to practise a sleight-of-hand upon himself and his readers. It is the words 'life and death' that he explains,—not the word 'eternal.' What he says about that word in his Correspondence arising out of his book, has been considered already (*ante*, pp. 38-42.) But so far as the present Essay is concerned, the discussion might be said to be simply upon 'life and death,' in the New Testament acceptance of these terms. In that view, the author



would meet with a large measure of concurrence in his statements on the part of intelligent evangelical ‘divines.’ They are accustomed to hold, that ‘the knowledge of the true God and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent’ is the life, the true “blessedness of those who seek God and love him,” both here and hereafter; and that “the loss of it” is death. They can quite understand how the experience of either condition must be such as the poet describes, when he speaks of “a long life curdled into an hour.” They venture, however, still to be of opinion that all this is compatible with the ‘life’ and the ‘death’ having connected with them the element of duration,—that when human beings are concerned, it is not possible to conceive either of the life or of the death apart from that element,—that whether the duration is or is not endless, is a question which it much concerns us to have settled,—that Scripture must be understood as intending to settle it,—that it does settle it by the use of the word ‘eternal,’ which, whatever else or whatever more it may denote, excludes the possibility of a termination or a change.

The author is fond of mixing up together two entirely distinct and separate inquiries, the one concerning the nature of the happiness or misery awaiting men, the other concerning its continuance. Much of what he says on the subject of the first inquiry is true and valuable; it is, indeed, in substance, what most preachers would regard as one of the commonplaces of their ministry.

They labour to teach that the blessedness of heaven must begin on earth, and that it essentially consists in a right knowledge of God, a right relation to him, and right affections towards him. The opposite of these things, they also teach, will mainly constitute the torment of hell. Charity, universal charity, is the pure joy of un-fallen spirits and redeemed men. Fear and hatred are the vultures which prey upon the condemned,—the devil and his angels,—the uncharitable who depart into the punishment prepared for their predecessors. But the inquiry concerning the continuance of these two different states of being must still be met as Scripture alone can meet it; unless, indeed, we adopt what appears to be the doctrine of these Essays, that no such different states of being are revealed in Scripture at all; that a judicial separation of men into two classes after death is a doting dream, an ignorant superstition, or a wicked device of priestcraft.

II. The author rapidly reviews ecclesiastical history. In the primitive Church he finds, as he thinks, a large latitude of belief. He can trace, on the one hand, the influence of the New Testament doctrine, that eternal life is the knowledge of God and eternal punishment or death the want of it,—as well as also the progress of material notions of retribution and reward,—in the conflict of opinions and interests which resulted in the formal doctrine of purgatory. In the more intelligent and spiritual believers of that doctrine,—and in the represen-

tation of it by the poet Dante,—he recognises the idea of an “ascent, not out of material torments, but out of moral evil, into a higher moral state;” and in Luther’s denunciation of indulgences, he discovers a protest “against the doctrine, that the greatest reward which the highest power in the Church can hold out, is deliverance from punishment, not deliverance from sin.” (Pp. 455–457.)

What he says of Luther is the truth, but not the whole truth. “Everything,” in Luther’s teaching, “turns upon the assertion, that a man requires and desires punishment, not indulgence, when he has done evil;” and that Tetzel doubly robbed the people of their money, since he not only blasphemously claimed a divine prerogative, but in the exercise of it promised “that which it is not good for a man to have.” This is well said, if by punishment is to be understood fatherly correction, not judicial condemnation. Luther repudiated the idea of any man being the better for a mere assurance of indulgence and impunity. Not thus will the awakened conscience be pacified, or the impure heart renewed. But the author must know that Luther strenuously asserted, as the antithesis of indulgence or impunity, justification, or a judicial act of acquittal and acceptance. He ought therefore to know that he is not fairly representing the Reformer’s sentiments when he gives his own idea of justification as a gloss upon Luther’s. And he ought further to know that Luther’s doctrine of justification in-

volved, what Luther himself undoubtedly believed, the final judicial condemnation of those who are not absolved from guilt in this world through a believing appropriation of Christ as their substitute and surety. Evidently, the author would leave his readers at this stage under the impression that the tendency of Luther's theology, and of the entire Reformation movement, was against the tenet of eternal punishment. And, indeed, he ascribes it partly to the Jesuit reaction, and partly to an inadequate recognition of the connexion between the visible and the invisible world in the different schools of the Reformation, that what he regards as the material conceptions of a future state retained, or regained, their sway in the Protestant churches. (P. 459.)

He comes now to the articles of his own Church, and has thus given occasion for a separate discussion, which for obvious reasons it is not expedient to mix up here with this analysis of his book. The modern asserters of the obnoxious tenet remain to be dealt with.

III. It has assumed now, very offensively, an active and aggressive form; "theologians have in our age become entirely positive and dogmatic upon this subject;" they "hold that a man is as much bound to say, 'I believe in the endless punishment of the greater portion of mankind,' as 'I believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost.'" (P. 462.)

If this is wit or sarcasm, it is singularly ill-timed; in every view, unsuitable and unseasonable. If the author,

being a serious man as he is, had been present to hear the answer to the question, 'Are there few that be saved?' it is to be hoped that he would have felt and owned its power. Most assuredly he would not have dared, in that presence, to forge such an article as this,—to foist it into the creed,—and charge it upon poor trembling guilty men who have as much charity at least as he has,—and who shudder for themselves while they speak to others, and testify to them of present grace as well as of coming judgment and retribution.

But he has philosophy on which he can fall back. He is prepared for a candid and "metaphysical" explanation of this modern evangelical mania.

1. John Locke is the convenient scapegoat. He is to England what Aristotle was to Germany; with a difference, however, rendering his influence more practical and paramount. "Aristotle belongs merely to the schools; Locke connects the schools with the world." He spoke to the "love of the simple and practical," which is peculiarly English. He "persuaded those who believed very little, not to pretend to believe more than they did." The drawback was, that he made it difficult to "recover some principles held by their ancestors," which, though not "represented in the dialect of the day," might yet be found to have a substance and meaning in them. Among these the author includes the meaning of the word 'eternity.' It is "a mere negation of time" according to Locke and a Locke-

ridden generation. According to the author, "it denotes something real, substantial, before all time." It is not necessary to discuss again this metaphysical question, in stating which the author does not quite fairly put the opposite doctrines. I may differ from Locke, and agree rather with the author, on the subject of eternity as opposed to time; I may hold eternity to be, not "a mere negation of time," but something positive, independent of time. And yet I may consistently hold that the idea or element of duration is common to both. Most certainly, however, Locke's philosophy does not much favour what seems to be the author's notion, that there is an absolute annihilation of time in the spiritual world. But it may be doubted how far such a notion is either consistent with common sense or intelligible by human reason.

2. In comparison with the apparently more comprehensive position which the Romish Church takes up, the author holds that "the distinctiveness, the individuality of Protestantism is its strength." "But close to that strength is its greatest weakness;" "the root of our sectarianism." Then follows the usual representation as to "the religious men, the saved men, being looked upon as exceptions to a rule." And this ushers in a sort of criticism on the word 'damnation.' That word, it appears, according to "its etymology" means,— "what it certainly did mean to the Church in former days,"—"the loss of a mighty gift which has been be-



stowed upon the race." But we do not understand it so now. "Men are not regarded as *rejecting the counsel of God against themselves*. God is represented as the Destroyer. Nay, divines go the length of asserting—even of taking it for granted—that when Christ taught his disciples to fear, '*not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do,*' but '*him which, after he has killed, hath power to cast into hell,*'"—he actually was speaking to them of God. "We are come," it seems, "to such a pass, as actually to suppose that Christ tells those whom he calls his *friends*, not to be afraid of" mere human enemies, "but of that greater enemy who can destroy their very selves, and that this enemy is—not the devil . . . but that God who cares for the sparrows. They are to be afraid lest He who numbers the hairs of their head should be plotting their ruin." (Pp. 468, 469.) Now, it must be deliberately said that this is neither more nor less than 'a railing accusation.' The critical sagacity which would rob the martyr or the confessor of the fear of God as his shield against the fear of man, and give him instead of that the fear of Satan,—so that when he braves death for Christ he may be said to do so, if not *suadente*, at least *minante diabolo* ;—the spiritual tact which finds in God's care of us now a reason for not dreading his displeasure if we prove unfaithful ;—may be left to speak for themselves. But the solemn truth which the Lord proclaims cannot be sacrificed either to sickly sentiment or to

sarcastic scorn ; ‘ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ! ’

The author tries to shock and startle us by putting into the lips of the Saviour “ the message which, according to this ”—the common—“ view of the case, Christ brings from heaven to earth.” It is literally given by him in these horrid words ; “ ‘ Your Father has created multitudes whom he means to perish for ever and ever. By my agony and bloody sweat, by my cross and passion, I have induced him in the case of an inconceivably small minority to forego that design.’ ” He seems to admit that this is “ a blasphemous thought ” which we “ dare not state as a proposition to ourselves or preach to others.” But he evidently thinks that it “ has mingled with our belief hitherto ; ”—he plainly means it to be accepted as the full and fair expression of that belief. (P. 470.)

We have been accustomed to this profane ribaldry, for it is nothing better, in the writings of infidels of the school of Paine, and Socinians of the school of Belsham. Nay, it is almost an injustice to name Belsham in this connexion. Were the theme not so awful, one might smile at the thought of there being a man capable of such extravagance of misrepresentation. But—‘ who would not weep if Atticus were he ? ’

3. The author can understand why divines should “ crave for some more distinct apprehensions, nay even statements, respecting eternal punishment, than might perhaps be necessary in former days.” He supposes

them to ask if this is the time for “relaxing the strictness of our statements,” when among all classes of our countrymen the words commonly used upon this subject are losing their power; and “a vague dream of bliss hereafter, into which righteousness and goodness do not enter, which has no relation to God, floats before the minds of numbers, but has just as little power to awaken them to any higher or better life, as the dread of the future has to keep them from any evil.” And he replies emphatically;—“We do, it seems to me, need to have a more distinct and awful idea of eternal death and eternal punishment than we have.” Making a distinction between these two things, he justly holds punishment, in the sense he puts upon the word, to be “less dreadful than death;” such punishment implies a punisher, and he who is punishing, men believe, “however faintly, to be a Father.” “The thought of his ceasing to punish them, of his letting them alone, of his leaving them to themselves, is the real, the unutterable horror.” (Pp. 470–473.) Be it so. There are not wanting intimations in Scripture that it is so. ‘Why should ye be stricken any more?’ ‘Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.’ But is not that the very point at which chastisement, correction, admonition, ceases, and punishment properly so called begins? No one believing that men are spiritual beings can refuse to go along with the author in his vivid picture of the dark and confused struggle between a man’s anticipation of meeting God, and the

shrinking of his whole nature from the loneliness and dreariness of being "friendless, homeless, fatherless." It is a struggle which, even to one "living without God in the world," may well be more "appalling" than "any outward terrors you can threaten him with." All this may be true. It is most true that the anguish of remorse, the fury of unsated passion, and above all the inextinguishable sense of alienation from the Holy One from whom escape is impossible,—must be the chief elements of "that second death, of which all material pictures offer only the faintest picture." (P. 474.) The author, surely, cannot be so ignorant as to imagine that this is a view different from that which evangelical divines are accustomed to enforce. To them as well as to him the second death is the opposite of the life which consists in the favour and fellowship of God; nor has he "the shadow of a dream" of a warrant for alleging, as he evidently means to do, that they "refer the state of eternal life and eternal death only to the future." They do not "in any wise identify it with the future," as separate from the present. On the contrary, they solemnly warn every man that his state hereafter will be what it is when he passes hence;—that there will be continuance, not alteration. And they solemnly warn him, moreover, that Scripture does not hold out the slightest hint or hope of any provision for effecting a change at any stage of his future existence;—no, nor the least prospect of his existence coming to an end; that so far from that, the express

statements which Scripture makes, and the fundamental principles of the divine government which Scripture asserts,—especially in connexion with the proclamation of mercy,—preclude the idea of another ransom being ever found, or another opportunity being ever given of ‘believing to the saving of the soul.’

This, and this alone, is the real question. It is throwing dust in men’s eyes to raise a cloudy, wordy discussion about some transcendental thought supposed to be hid in the term ‘eternal.’ And it is beside the point to create a prejudice by loading ‘divines’ with the obloquy of materialising and making monstrous the doctrine of a future state, upon which, so far as the nature of that state is concerned, they are at least as spiritual and rational as the author himself. The case stands actually thus. We live now; we live after death; we are to live for ever. The author believes that we are. His speculation about ‘eternal’ does not touch the doctrine of our continued and endless subsistence as living persons; it merely makes out, or tries to make out, that when that word qualifies life and death as contrasted states of being,—life as a blessing, death as an evil,—there is no reference to the duration or endurance, but only to the nature, of the blessing indicated on the one hand and the evil characterized on the other. There is not a doubt cast upon the fact, that we are destined not only to survive death, but never to die. The whole reasoning implies this. Well, then. We have a con-

scious personal existence now—we exist now ; we continue to exist—to have a conscious personal existence,—when we die ; and ever after, without end. Moreover, what we are when we die,—what we are with respect to God,—with respect to our state and character toward God,—that we continue to be after death. And the solemn inquiry is this : if I am not right with God when I die, is there any ground for hoping that I ever at any future time shall be ?

1. The author himself evidently feels that even upon his own system, it is impossible to conclude certainly that all evil will everywhere come to an end. “I ask no one,” he says, “to pronounce, for I dare not pronounce myself, what are the possibilities of resistance in a human will to the loving will of God. There are times when they seem to me—thinking of myself more than of others—almost infinite. But I know that there is something which must be infinite. I am obliged to believe in an abyss of love which is deeper than the abyss of death.”—“I must feel that this love is compassing the universe. More about it I cannot know. But God knows. I leave myself and all to him.” (P. 476.) He is content, apparently, to let shadows, clouds and darkness, rest upon the future state. And let it be observed that they rest alike on the future state of all. So far as the author’s meaning may be gathered, not from this passage only but from his whole argument, neither death nor judgment is to any of the children of men the



beginning of a new order of things,—a new manner of dealing with them on the part of God. With reference to all alike, the present economy, or dispensation, or whatever else it may be called,—the present arrangement by which “the loving will of God” and “the human will” are brought into contact with one another,—is to continue uninterrupted; with more of discovery, no doubt,—with a fuller revelation,—but still in principle essentially the same. Where, then, is the security that evil will ever anywhere come to an end? Is there any living man, let him have gone ever so far in learning to submit his own human will to the loving will of God, to whom the thought of an infinite prolongation of what his experience—even at the best—has been here, would give solid comfort? The author says well that, “thinking of himself more than of others,” he sometimes feels as if “the possibilities of resistance” were “almost infinite.” True, every man who knows God—who knows himself—will reply; the more he knows God and himself, the more earnestly will he reply; most true. I certainly need not exult over others. I have in myself a will capable of almost infinite resistance to the loving will of my Father; the deep consciousness that I have, causes me all the days of my life, if I rejoice, to rejoice with trembling. And is it nothing more than the endless lengthening out of this trembling joy that I am to look for as my haven of rest,—my recompence of reward,—at last? Is this all of heaven I am ever to

taste? Tell me not of a fuller discovery, a fuller revelation, of God and of myself. For anything I now feel, I cannot see but that, instead of giving relief, that should add new intensity to my sensitive concern. Perhaps, however, it is not to be always thus. I am to reach a stage of advancement at which there is to be no more trembling,—no more struggle,—no more contending with evil tendencies or an evil spirit,—no more possibility at all of resistance on the part of my human will to the loving will of God. I ask, how? Is it by my being placed in a new position, in which, my appointed trial being over, I am to be tried no more? Is it that God brings to an end the discipline by which he has been guiding me here, and takes me home to himself, and makes me perfectly like himself, and introduces me to new scenes and a new society, in which there is no room any more for anything like what Job felt, or Paul, or Christ when he prayed in the garden? That is good news for me,—for me, the chief of sinners,—saved by grace alone,—standing while here always on the verge of a fall, and standing by faith alone. But it seems to involve the whole matter in debate respecting a judicial procedure, to issue in the acquittal and gracious acknowledgment of some,—in the condemnation and rejection of others. If, again, I am told that although there may be no essential change in my position, but only a clearer light,—still walking in that light, I may learn more and more thoroughly to

go along with the loving will of God, and so may cease to be haunted by any consciousness of possibilities of resistance in my human will,—then I put the case of those who pass into that clearer light actually resisting, and continuing to resist, the loving will of God,—and I ask what, according to the same law or principle which may seem to minister hope to me, must be the inevitable tendency of the course which they are following? Is it not in the direction of ever-increasing resistance,—an ever-widening separation? And is there any provision revealed in Scripture, or even imagined by the author, for arresting or changing that course; for ‘the Ethiopian changing his skin and the leopard his spots, and those learning to do good who are accustomed to do evil?’

2. But in truth the author has no right to raise the question of the duration of future rewards and punishments; at any rate ‘divines’ are not called upon to discuss it with him. They have to move a previous question. That previous question has respect to their reality. For the ends of popular declamation, or the *argumentum ad invidiam*, it is easy to gibbet before the eyes of an admiring crowd the preacher who would persuade one and all of them, as Whitefield persuaded the Kingswood colliers, to flee from the wrath to come;—it is easy to make him seem as a demon, whose joy it is to brood over the agony of lost souls,—whose gospel flames with fire and smells of brimstone. The author has incurred responsibility

enough on that score. But a theologian ought to know that the subject must be approached from another point of view altogether. Are men to be separated into two classes? Is the separation to be a judicial act? These are the primary elements of the inquiry. As to the first, it is not necessary for the present purpose to determine when or how the separation is to be made. That it is made really, as regards individuals, at death;—publicly and collectively, as regards the whole race, at the coming of Christ,—is the common belief. Nor as to the second point, is there any propriety in drawing on fancy for the details of a great world-assize. The two questions stand in their bare and naked simplicity; Are men to be separated into two classes, at and after death, according to the deeds done in the body? Is the separation of them to be, on the part of God, a judicial act? ‘Divines’ answer both of these questions in the affirmative. According to them, the Bible, from first to last, teaches that there is a radical, fundamental, vital difference, between the present state of things on the earth, and the state into which the inhabitants of the earth are passing, and which is commonly and conveniently called the future state. Of course it is not future in one sense; since it is already in existence, and we have important relations to it now. But to all living men it is practically the future state; and with deference to the author’s hypercriticism, the expression may, for brevity’s sake, be allowed. Now, the point of contrast

between the present state and the future state is, that men are mixed indiscriminately in the one, that they are separated by a final judgment in the other. Men, even here, are reducible, at any given moment, to two classes,—those whom God justifies, and those whom God condemns. They are known to God as belonging to the one class, or as belonging to the other; but they are not known to one another; often not to themselves; and above all, there is no fixed line or ‘great gulph’ to prevent any from passing out of the one class into the other. Then, again, God does not seem, in his treatment of them, to make a marked or unequivocal distinction between them. There are, no doubt, indications of his favouring really, though not outwardly, the one class; and there are instincts within, and events without, which give no insignificant hint of what may ultimately be his manner of dealing with the other. But in the mean time God exercises over them a common providence, and proclaims to all of them a common message of mercy. So long as that message is proclaimed, the separation of the two classes is not stereotyped or confirmed. The acceptance of the message at any time transfers a living man from the class of the condemned to the class of the justified. All this Scripture traces to the forbearance, the long-suffering of God. It is the suspension of a judicial sentence lying upon all men for their sins. It is a suspension granted in order that there may be a proclamation of mercy to all;—emphatic warning being at

the same time given, that if the message is not believed, the sentence must continue in force, with all the aggravation of guilt which a refusal of grace implies. These considerations necessarily point to a time when God is to change his method of government over men individually, and over the race. For the present, viewing it broadly, it is a government of suspended judgment and offered mercy. Sentence is not executed, because a ministry of grace is going forward. But this very circumstance implies that in some future day the government is to take again the judicial form and character, and men are to receive according to their deeds, either good or evil.

According to these views, the separation of men hereafter into two classes, upon a judicial principle, is to be explained in connexion with their being at present mixed together, upon a principle of forbearance; as well as also in accordance with the economy of mercy which the gospel reveals. They are not views which the author will admit. They have been already under discussion in this examination of the Essays, and indeed all throughout. In point of fact it is here that the doctrine of a future state held commonly by 'divines,' presses hard upon "the principle of the author's whole book." He would have his readers to believe that it is "the notion of everlasting punishment after death,"—the notion of its being everlasting,—that contradicts the principle of this book. It really is not so. It is the notion of there being any judgment, or any punishment at all,—in the



plain, common-sense meaning of these words. Will he grant that God is about to separate the righteous into a class by themselves,—the evil into a class by themselves; to confer upon the good some new privilege—some new element of happiness which they do not now possess; to inflict upon the evil some new deprivation—some new element of misery beyond what is now their portion? He cannot; for it cuts up by the roots his whole theology. And he will not, for another reason also. He is too shrewd not to see, that if but that much is held to be true, neither Scripture nor reason affords any warrant whatever for limiting the duration of what the righteous are to enjoy and what the evil are to suffer; that, on the contrary, if there is actual, forensic judgment, both Scripture and reason demand a judgment with everlasting issues.

3. Anything like a full examination of the evidence which forces upon 'divines' the belief which this Essay so unbecomingly stigmatizes is not to be attempted here. A single observation is suggested by one of the coarsest of those revilings into which his entire loss of temper and patience on this subject has betrayed the author. He dares to address, "especially to the clergy," these words:—"The doctrine of endless punishment is avowedly put forward as necessary for the reprobates of the world, the publicans and harlots, though perhaps religious men might dispense with it. Now I find in our Lord's discourses, that when he used such words as these, 'Ye

*serpents, ye generation of vipers, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?*' he was speaking to religious men, to doctors of the law; but that when he went among publicans and sinners, it was to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God." Is this wit? for it is not wisdom. Is it decent to trifle with the words of Jesus? Is it the author's opinion that Christ is in these words teaching the doctrine of endless punishment as necessary for religious men,—doctors of the law? But, seriously, does the author find the clergy making use of the doctrine, whether among publicans and sinners, or among 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' ever at any other time, or in any other connexion, than at the very time when they are preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and in connexion with the preaching of it? This, indeed, is the only use which they are required to make of it,—the only use which they can ever find it in their hearts to make of it. It is a libel to say that they employ the doctrine of endless punishment merely to restrain the reprobate, or, indeed, that they employ it for that purpose at all. It is a worse and more heartless libel to insinuate that they feel complacency when they consign to that doom whole multitudes indiscriminately, whose measures of light, and circumstances of trial, God only can know. No! When I speak of that theme, I speak of it with exclusive reference to myself and those who hear me. I dare not keep it back: it is part of the whole counsel of God. I *must* testify that there is a judgment to

come, and an endless retribution thereafter. But it is to myself and to them that I apply the testimony. I have nothing to do with the threatening of wrath against others. It is the threatening of wrath against myself,—against my hearers,—which alone is either their concern or mine. And it is their concern and mine all the more, because ‘the kingdom of God is come nigh’ to us both. ‘What have we to do,’ I cry,—‘either you or I,—with the punishment to which those may be justly liable who have never had our advantages, our opportunities, our exemption from temptation, the preaching of this gospel which is now sounding in our ears? Let us think of ourselves. We, at least, are without excuse. Whatever may be the measure of the guilt of others, ours must be all the greater for this very message of warning and of mercy, if we refuse to listen, and believe, and be saved.’ I thank God continually that it is in preaching the gospel of the kingdom I am called to speak of the wrath to come; but woe unto me if I leave any to whom I preach that gospel under the impression that they may cast away from them the fear of suffering, and that for endless ages, the vengeance of eternal fire!

## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

WHILE engaged in passing the preceding chapters through the press, I received the following anonymous letter. I would not in ordinary circumstances notice such a communication. But it is so evidently genuine and earnest, and it furnishes so good a text for what I wish to say in closing my remarks, that I am tempted to avail myself of it :

“I lately saw from the *Glasgow Free Church Guardian*, that you had been lecturing against that great-minded man Maurice. No doubt he has his faults, but he surely cannot be the heretic you make him to be. He has strengthened and comforted many a waverer in the faith of God’s Son.

“Surely he cannot be the dangerous teacher you have represented him, or the Archbishop of Canterbury would not have expressed his confidence in the soundness of Bishop Colenso of Natal, who thus writes of Maurice to the Archbishop:— ‘In company with a thousand others, I do love and honour Mr Maurice as a great religious teacher. But I do not in all points—nor in some material points—agree with him, as my sermons sufficiently shew. I have said that he, more than any other *living* writer, has taught me to bring the great fact of the Incarnation of our Lord to bear upon the commonest doings of

my daily life. In all my own life-struggle, and in all my intercourse and labours with my fellow-men, he has taught me to fix my faith upon a Person, an ever-present Lord and Master, not upon a system of doctrines, however good and scriptural. He has taught me also to bring that great fact to bear upon the condition of the heathen world, and to realize the full meaning of that truth which I was taught from my childhood, that I learn from the Creed to believe in God the Son, who both redeemed me and *all mankind*.' See more in 'A Letter to his Grace,' &c.

"The Archbishop writes to Dr Colenso, with full confidence in him and his teaching. See his Grace's letter in the *London Guardian* of 7th December.

"I would further add, that a bishop has, within the last few days, recommended the writer of this to put Maurice's *Theological Essays* into the hands of a person earnestly seeking the truth, but in difficulty and distress on some points, more particularly bearing on the Atonement of our Lord. I must add, that this bishop does *not* approve of Mr Maurice's *last* Essay."

Dr Colenso has indicated what is probably the most attractive feature of Mr Maurice's theological teaching,—the prominence given to the Incarnation of our Lord as fixing our faith upon a Person, not upon a system of doctrines. This antithesis or contrast is the charm. A system of doctrines is supposed to come in between us and the living person of our ever-present Lord and Master,—to set him aside and occupy his place. Now, it may be true that this is sometimes the effect of systematic theology; nay, it may be admitted that this is a tendency against which both students and teachers of it require to be continually on their guard. Christ, and not certain truths about Christ,—an actual, living, personal Christ, not far off, but nigh me, in me,—is the

object of my believing apprehension, my believing and affectionate embrace. The union effected by the Holy Spirit between me, the sinner, and Christ, the Saviour, is real and personal; and it is realized as personal by faith. What there is in Mr Maurice's manner of presenting the Incarnation that tends peculiarly to fix our faith upon a living person, it might be interesting to inquire. Certainly, in so far as it does so, it is to be highly commended; and in so far as other divines make any system of doctrines about Christ stand for Christ himself, they are to be condemned. It must be observed, however, that according to the theology of these Essays, the Incarnation is the one single fact in the history of Christ that has, or can have, any real doctrinal significance. It is the only one of the events recorded concerning him in respect of which he stands alone; all the others are common to him and all mankind, and have no other meaning in his case than in theirs. Hence this theology has the advantage of great apparent simplicity as compared with the ordinary theology; it is less in danger of fixing our faith on a system of doctrines instead of a living person; for in fact it has only one doctrine properly so called in its Christology, and that one doctrine is, that Christ is a living person. But the question still remains,—do the other doctrines commonly taught concerning Christ,—in particular those concerning his vicarious obedience, his atoning death, his resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at the right hand



of God, his coming again to judge the world,—really complicate the system so as to keep in the background or in the shade the living Saviour? That they may be taught in a hard, dry, and as it were impersonal manner, tending almost to give the impression that the Saviour himself, as well as his work of salvation, is a mere instrument or expedient to be taken advantage of for securing a selfish end,—is quite true. But when rightly taught, have they any such tendency? Let me be moved and enabled to embrace the eternal Son, the Man Christ Jesus, as my substitute actually taking my place under the law which I have violated, fulfilling on my behalf all its righteousness, bearing the burden of my criminality,—of my condemnation,—expiating the guilt of my sin by the propitiatory sacrifice of himself. Let me embrace him also as my surety, representative and head, rising from the grave, passing into the heavens, pleading my cause, ruling over all things for me, giving the Holy Spirit to assure me of his uninterrupted sympathy and love, of his presence with me always, not indeed in the body, yet so that by faith I may apprehend him as ever at my right hand, ever in my heart. Let me embrace him finally as my King, Lord and Judge, who is continually judging, trying, correcting me now, and whom I expect to see coming again in glory;—to vindicate right—to redress wrong—to end the long strife of mingled good and evil—to bring the dispensation of forbearance and grace, with all the questions it occasions,

to a righteous close,—to welcome the loyal subjects of his Father into the many mansions of his Father's house,—to give terrible proof that in the character of the Holy God, and in his government of the world, retributive justice is a reality. Let me thus embrace Christ, and I surely feel that it is not with a system of doctrines I am dealing,—that it is no cloud of words I am taking to my heart,—that it is a living person whom I am grasping,—rather who is grasping me, 'whom, having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing, I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of my faith, the salvation of my soul.' This is something more than the Incarnation as the author represents it, and with deference to the Bishop of Natal, it is something better.

The other benefit for which Dr Colenso owns his obligation to his friend's teaching on the subject of the Incarnation is, that it has taught him to realize the full meaning of the truth, 'I learn from the Creed to believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and *all mankind*.' This also is an attractive feature in the author's theology; it appears so when it is contrasted with the more narrow and exclusive if not selfish views, as they are alleged to be, of those who consider, either that the purchase of redemption, or that at all events the saving application of redemption, is limited to a portion of mankind,—what portion or what proportion they do not pretend to say. As this is a very favourite topic with

the author himself, which he is continually casting in the teeth of 'divines,' at the expense not only of charity and temper but of decency and good manners,—and as it is one which did not fall to be discussed very formally or fully in the examination of the Essays, a few remarks upon it may not be unsuitable here.

It is an old maxim in logic, '*quo major extensio, minor comprehensio.*' The wider the extent is to which you apply a term, the less can you comprehend in the term itself. If redemption is co-extensive with the race of man *de facto* as well as *de jure*,—if Christ has redeemed all mankind, not merely in the sense of his incarnation, obedience, and atoning death being available for all men, but in the sense of this entire work of his being actually and effectually of avail, and of equal avail, to all men,—the amount of benefit implied in such a universal redemption must be small indeed. No doubt, if the doctrine of universal salvation is connected with it, the benefit is large enough; but the bishop, it seems, repudiates that doctrine, and the author will not commit himself to it. Setting it aside, therefore, I ask what does this redemption of all mankind include or comprehend? Nor do I touch here the controversy between Calvinists and Arminians. Whether in any sense Christ died for all men, and if so, in what sense,—may be a question '*intra muros Iliacos*,' among those who believe that his death is a real and actual propitiatory sacrifice. The most exclusive ultra-Calvinist will not

deny that mankind universally are indebted to the Cross, for he ascribes to the Cross the universal dispensation of forbearance and the universal offer of mercy. The most liberal evangelical Arminian will tell you, that although the atoning sacrifice is offered for all, none are in point of fact savingly interested in it unless they are converted and born again,—unless they repent and believe; he will tell you, also, that in the case of all who believe, the atonement effects a positive change of condition, delivering them from all condemnation and restoring them to the favour and fellowship of God. But the view which the author holds is very different. According to him, whatever change the incarnation or the atonement of Christ is fitted and designed to effect, is effected already in the case of all alike; universal humanity is already redeemed, regenerated, glorified; and there is absolutely nothing which a believing man can say that he owes to Christ beyond what all men universally, whatever may be their state and character, owe to him. How such a redemption of all mankind can afford relief or satisfaction in the view of the condition of the heathen, except upon the hypothesis of ultimate universal salvation, Dr Colenso may be able to explain. But, in fact, is it not with the actual state of the heathen that we have practically to do? It is that which gives them a claim upon our regard, and lays upon us a duty towards them. A missionary bishop would doubtless be the last man to welcome any doctrine or speculation on account of

its being fitted to mitigate our horror of heathenism, to lessen our feeling of obligation toward the heathen or our sense of the urgency of their case. The teaching of his friend must be felt by him as having an entirely opposite effect upon his own mind. Still, it must be observed that the line of thought in question is, to say the least of it, not parallel to what is suggested by a near view of the deplorable darkness and degradation in which so many of our fellow-men at home and abroad are sunk, or by an earnest study of our Lord's command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' The theory of a redeemed humanity is not necessarily inconsistent with the utmost tenderness of sympathy and the utmost promptitude in action. There may be those who find in it a motive to deeper pity and more energetic effort. At the same time, these two considerations,—their miserable case and my Lord's last command,—are surely enough to influence and guide me in the discharge of my duty towards the heathen,—towards all ungodly men. And I may warrantably feel that I have no right to look beyond;—that if at any time the vast thought of the 'dark places of the earth still full of the habitations of cruelty,' is apt to prove too appalling and altogether overwhelming to my soul, the legitimate Scriptural remedy is to be found, not in any more favourable or sanguine contemplation of humanity in the abstract, or humanity *en masse*, but in more special exertions for the deliverance of human

beings, as I have access to them, and more unceasing and importunate prayer for a divine blessing upon the exertions of others. These exertions must, of course, be in accordance with the views which I hold on the subject of the redeeming work of the Son and the regenerating work of the Spirit. But they need not be at all the less compassionate or the less hopeful because the message I have to carry, and to help others in carrying, is ;—that the Father giveth the Son to be a real propitiation for guilt of deepest dye, and the Spirit to effect a real and radical change, a gracious and happy renovation, in natures the most hardened and depraved, in hearts the most desperately wicked.

There are some other points on which a word or two might be said. In particular, it might be interesting to trace everywhere and always in the world the presence of the eternal, living Word who is the light of men, and the influence of the darkness in which it shines, everywhere and always obscuring, quenching it ;—to illustrate this great principle in its historical application to all ages, nations, and religions, both before and since the publication of Christianity. The subject has an important bearing on the inquiries in which I have been engaged ; but the discussion of it is by far too serious for me ; especially here and now, at the end of a volume. I rather choose to close with a single general observation on the one great question raised by these Essays.

That question, as it seems to me, concerns the nature



of the government of God. Is it a government of law? Does God rule intelligent beings by a law? Certainly, I may be told. Who doubts it? The government of God is a government of law,—of the law of love. But I must be allowed again to ask, In what sense is it a government of law? For the familiar use of the expression, ‘laws of nature,’ has introduced an ambiguity into this phrase. What is a government of law, a government by law? If I am absolutely dependent upon a being possessed of certain tastes, under the influence, let it be supposed, of a particular ruling passion,—if he and I are inseparably bound together so that I must make up my mind to receive all my good from him and find all my good in him, such as he is,—then in his tastes, in his ruling passion, I have a law, conformity to which is the condition of my well-being. Obviously, however, this ruling passion in him is a law to me, in precisely the same sense in which any quality in matter is a law to me; in that sense and in no other. My intimate connexion with the material world makes conformity to the unchanging principles, according to which its movements proceed, a condition of my well-being as a creature endowed with a physical nature. My intimate connexion with the being or person with whom I am living and am always to live, makes conformity to the unchanging principle or habit or ruling passion according to which he uniformly feels and acts, the condition of my well-being as a being endowed with the capacity of feeling

and acting as he does. Let his ruling passion be pure charity or love. Then, in one sense, there is a law of love brought into contact with my will. The law of love is unbending, and it has in it an element of wrath against the unlovely. My will is perverse, apt to incline towards subjection to a usurping tyrant or an intruding tempter, capable of almost infinite resistance. But the law of love works steadily on,—it unfolds and reveals itself,—it embodies itself in action,—it is manifested wonderfully in a redeeming and regenerating economy,—and ultimately one cannot see how it can fail to bring my will, and every reasonable will, into accordance with itself. For anything I can perceive, government by law in any other sense than this, is not recognised at all in the theology of these Essays. It is needless to add that the whole theology of those who are commonly considered orthodox and evangelical divines, is based upon an entirely different conception both of government and of law. According to them, it is an administrative government that God exercises, a government embracing in it legislation, judicial procedure, calling to account, awarding sentences; it is an authoritative law, with distinct sanctions annexed to it, that God promulgates and enforces. This is what they understand when they speak of God being a moral Ruler as well as a holy and loving Father. They cannot rid themselves of the impression, that both Scripture and conscience attest the reality of such a government and such a law. It is

under that impression that they draw out from Scripture, to meet the anguish of conscience, those views of the guilt of sin and its complete expiation, the corruption of nature and its thorough renovation,—those views of pardon, peace, reconciliation, reward,—which they delight to urge upon all men in the name of Him who ‘hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn unto him and live.’ And it is under the same impression that they think they find in the essential freedom of the will of man, as a responsible agent,—an explanation, on the one hand, of the possibility of evil entering into the universe under the rule of a good and holy God; and on the other hand also, a probable explanation of the impossibility of there being any provision of mercy brought within the reach of men, which does not imply a provision also for the case of that mercy being neglected or refused.

THE END.





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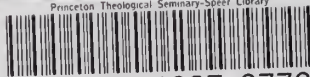
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